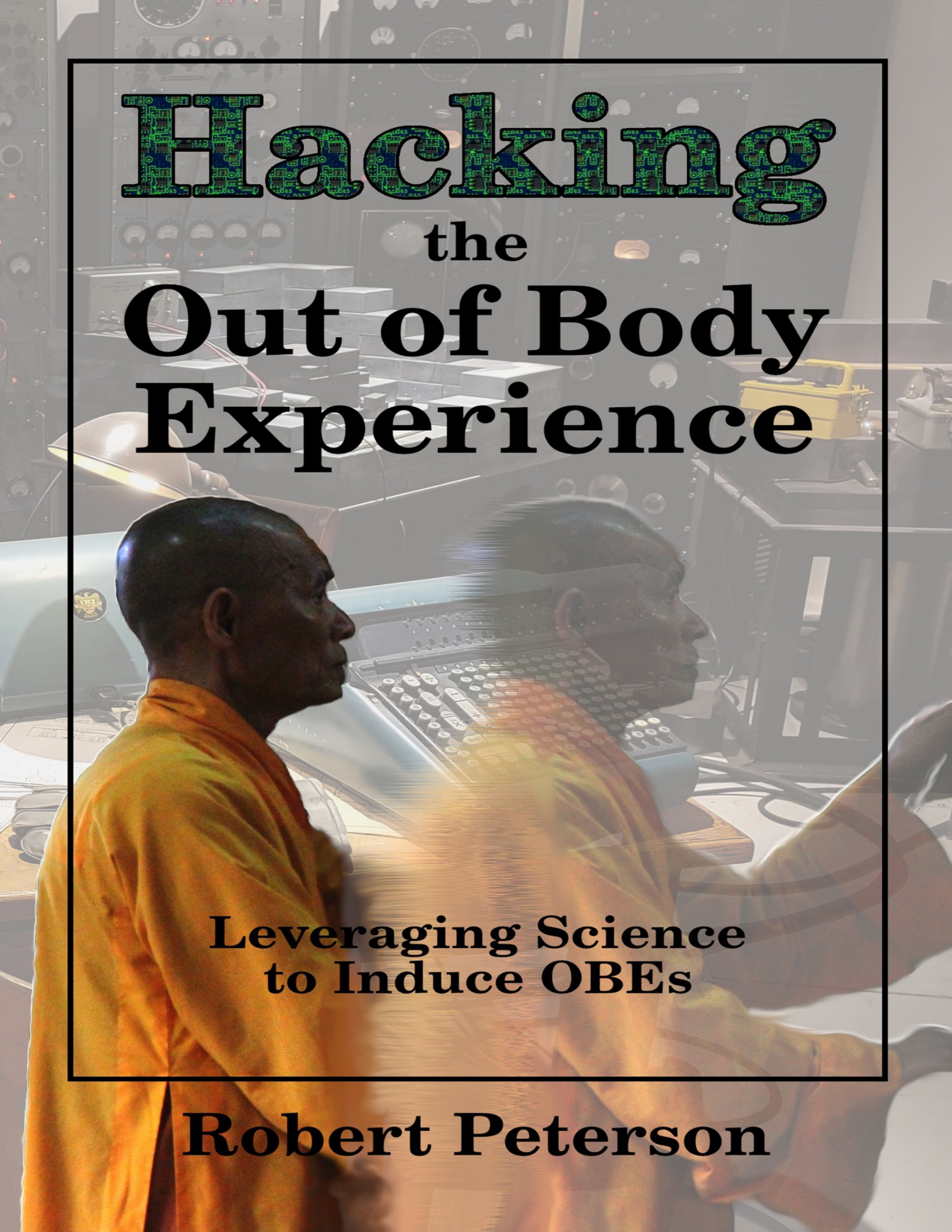
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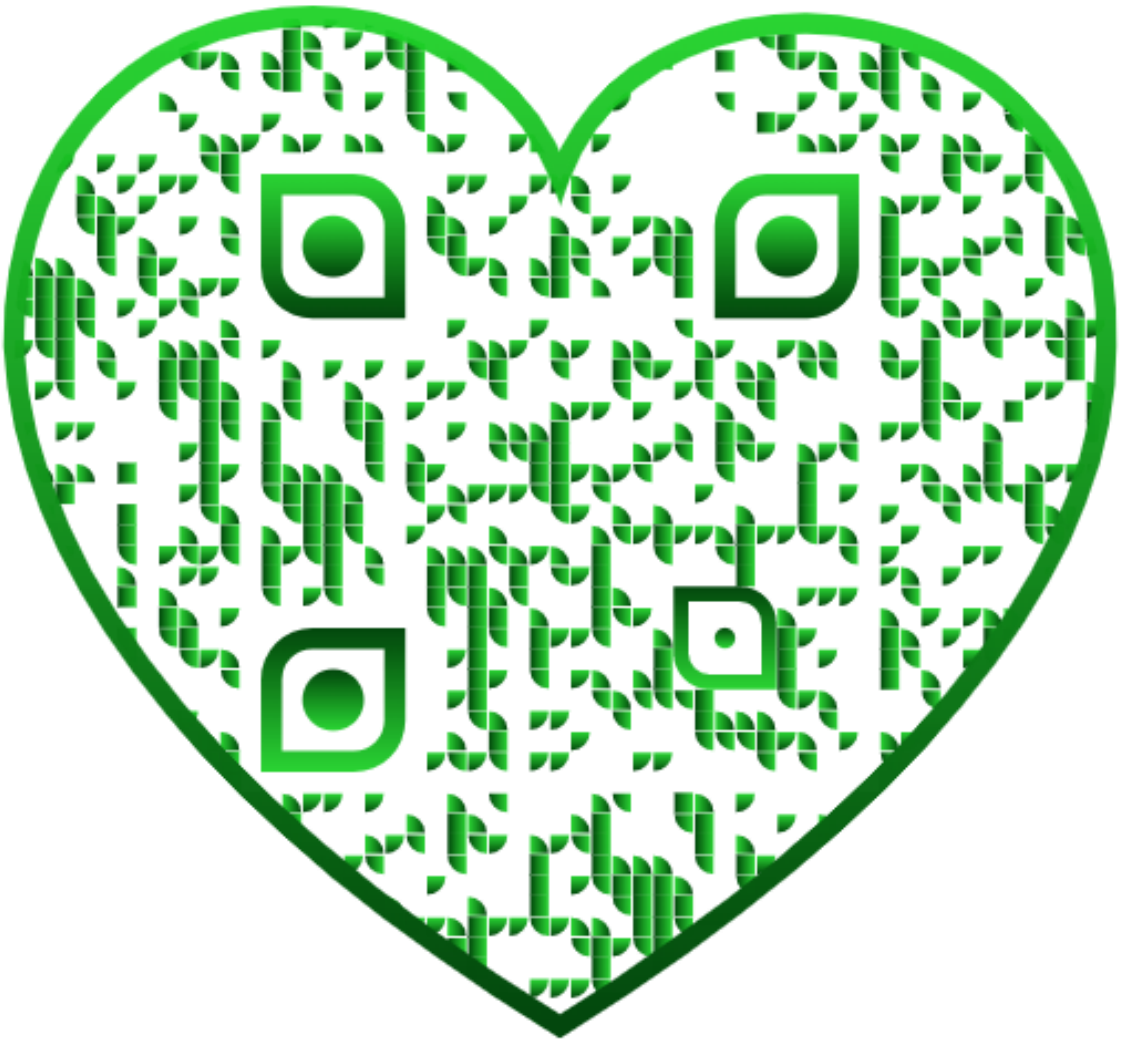

# Hacking the
# Out of Body Experience

## Leveraging Science to Induce OBEs

Robert Peterson

## Also by Robert Peterson

Out of Body Experiences:
How to Have Them and What to Expect

Lessons Out of the Body:
A Journal of Spiritual Growth and Out-of-Body Travel

The Gospel According to Mike
(a novel)

Answers Within:
How to Use Your Inner Voice for Wisdom, Spirituality and Psychic

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The many authors, past and present, who were bold enough to share their OBE discoveries, techniques, and insights with the world.

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# Introduction

I thought about titling this book "50 Ways to Leave Your Body" which brings to mind the old song by Paul Simon. "Slip out the back, Jack!" There are actually more than 50 OBE techniques in the book, but in the end I decided it didn't quite fit. A friend suggested "50 Shades of OBE" too, but that sounded too cavalier. This is a serious book about how to leverage science for OBEs. As a computer guy, the concept of hacking your way in just makes more sense to me.

The only goal of this book is to give you enough tools to self-induce out-of-body experiences (OBEs). It will provide numerous OBE techniques from a wide variety of sources, including the best recommendations from experts in the field. It will also provide a dvanced strategies, advice, tricks, tips, hacks, and secrets for inducing OBEs. Best of all, this will all be grounded in **science** and **experience** , not superstition or lore. By science, I primarily mean modern brain science (neuroscience), medicine, and psychology.

I wrote this book for one simple reason. One day in 2017, I realized it had been twenty years since my first book, Out of Body Experiences: How to Have Them and What to Expect, had been published. That hit me hard. What hit me harder was that, although it met with some success, it was not the de facto guide to inducing OBEs, as I thought it would be. The OBE groups on Facebook still got daily posts asking "How can I do astral projection?" I was especially dismayed to read a comment from one guy who said, "I read a bunch of books: William Buhlman, Robert Monroe, Robert Bruce, Robert Peterson, and I still can't do it." Clearly my instructions weren't enough. Apparently my well-defined OBE induction procedures, that worked so well for me,

didn’t work for others. I needed to fix that.

More frustrating was the fact that as I had become older, it had become harder for me to induce OBEs. It wasn’t that I didn’t know the process. It just didn’t work as well for me anymore. What once seemed easy was now difficult. I had become distracted by worldly matters: my job, wife, house, dog, hobbies, and many reasons to not sleep in late like I had. I had gotten not only lazy, but rusty.

But wait. Was it that? As a hobby, I had studied the human brain for years, so I wondered: Was it something about the aging process? Did my brain produce less melatonin at night or was my pineal gland a victim of years of calcification? Had my neural pathways for OBEs been rerouted from underutilization? Had my years as a computer analyst caused my brain to become too analytic? Had I gained too much weight or become vitamin deficient? Was it my blood pressure medicine?

I began experimenting with vitamins and supplements to study their effects. I experimented with various forms of meditation, mantras, and so forth. I listened to binaural beats, hemi-sync, and other audio tracks that supposedly help with OBEs. I re-doubled my affirmations and intentions.

I started to feel like simple instructions were not enough. Inducing an OBE requires a delicate balance of a lot of factors, and if any one of those is off, it doesn’t happen. But what are those factors? In my 58 years, I had amassed a collection of more than 200 books on astral projection and OBEs, and they often conflicted with one another. Some books said to get ample sleep, or even oversleep; others said sleep deprivation helps. Some said to practice in total darkness; others, a dimly lit room. Some recommended you be as comfortable as possible; others recommended slight discomfort. Some advocated a stress-free lifestyle; others said some stress helps. There are even

disagreements about which direction to point your body, what to eat, and how to meditate. Why the disparity? Is there a scientific basis for this, like differences of body chemistry, brain chemistry, or hormones, or is it purely psychological? I previously spent years analyzing what worked and didn't for me. In the end, the only thing that really ever mattered for me was how much time I spent practicing [1], but clearly that wasn't enough. I needed to think outside the box.

I wanted to make OBEs more accessible, for me and for others. So I did more research. I started re-reading my OBE library, gleaning what I could from every book, and acquiring new books as they were published, then posting a book review on my blog to share what I found with others. Every book I read had important clues, but none of them brought it all together.

I devoured books on neuroscience and brain research, like Mapping the Mind by Rita Carter and research papers on the brain's Default Mode Network (DMN) and its role in consciousness. I found a huge gap between what scientists and OBE adepts believe. Most scientists say OBEs are all inside your brain; a "perfect storm" of electrical activity inside your skull. Most adepts insist OBEs are experiences of a non-physical world. "Seeing is believing. Experience trumps belief." Full disclosure: I've had many hundreds of (or maybe more than a thousand) OBEs since 1980, so I count myself among this group.

Most experiencers vehemently deny the scientists: "Looking for the soul inside the brain is like looking for the announcer inside the radio." Meanwhile, most scientists deny the experiencers: "Where is the proof? It's all inside your head, and evidence to suggest otherwise is merely coincidence." So which is it, subjective or objective? Brain or soul? Monism or dualism? Since most experiencers don't care about proof and aren't

providing a lot of concrete evidence, it falls to the scientists to uncover the truth. But the key to science hinges on our ability to reproduce what we wish to study.

That's the rub: to learn the truth, we need to make the OBE more accessible and reproducible. A growing number of people want to induce them too, but the experts often provide only scant and cryptic hints on how to do so. Meanwhile, the handful of open-minded scientists who really care are usually underfunded and squirrel away their findings in scientific journals behind pay walls, giving us nothing but more scant and cryptic hints. Where's the common ground?

That's where I come in.

My goal, then, is to make OBEs more accessible to everyone. R egardless of whether or not you believe in a non-physical component—other dimensions, astral planes, and so forth—we can learn a lot by studying what happens to the body and brain during an OBE and other mystical experiences. To that end, I've compiled what both scientists and experts in the field know about OBEs, and used that to extrapolate best practices, techniques, diet, supplements, and habits to induce them. I'll also explain how and why they work. I plan to provide only useful information abou inducing OBEs, so unlike my first book, I won't even share any stories or narratives unless they serve that purpose.

I will also provide a **lot** of OBE induction techniques. I realize everyone has unique needs and psychological makeup, so different techniques work for different people. I encourage you to try each of these techniques for a couple weeks to determine what works best for you.

Robert Peterson,

4 July 2019

[1] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, chapter 23.

# Part 1 - Out-of-body Basics

# Chapter 1. So Many Questions

This book is different from other books on out-of-body experiences (also known as OOBEs, OBEs or astral projection in the literature) because i t leverages **science** to help you induce them r ather than relying upon rumor, superstition, or even religious or occult traditions . So I'll try not to peddle any New Age "woo-woo" beliefs, or at least, minimally. I firmly believe there's no such thing as "supernatural" or "paranormal;" everything we experience is natural and normal. If it seems to be otherwise, we just don't understand it well enough.

My goal is to help you achieve OBEs, so I won't waste time on narratives, history, or other information unless it will help you understand and induce OBEs. I'm going to teach you a plethora of techniques to reach the OBE state from experts in the field, but grounded in the science behind those techniques. In other words, I'm going to give you the keys to the candy store.

Some of the discussions in the book get a bit heavy on science. I felt this was necessary not only to satisfy science-minded readers, but to provide a solid foundation for the techniques: how and why they work. I hate when a book gives some technique "because it works" without explaining why. I immediately get suspicious and write it off as rumor or superstition. Many occult books are like that, and when they do explain things, they often rely upon a framework of wild unproven assumptions based on centuries-old traditions rather than principles of science.

I'm not only drawing on science, but also the experts in the field: the people who wrote books on how to achieve OBEs. There's a lot out there, and I've spent a considerable amount of time picking through them, deciphering some of the more cryptic techniques, sifting the good from the bad, figuring out what works

and what doesn't, and piecing together the common themes and why they make sense from a science point of view.

In this chapter, I'll try to anticipate your basic questions and answer them in a straightforward way. The first question you're probably asking is:

**What are my credentials? Why listen to me?**

I've been studying and inducing out-of-body experiences since 1979, so I have about 40 years of personal experiences. I've also amassed a collection of more than 200 books on the topic of OBEs and astral projection, almost all of which I've studied. That doesn't include the many books I own on peripheral topics like near-death experiences (NDEs), remote viewing (RV), shamanism, mysticism, lucid dreaming (LD), and Altered States of Consciousness (ASC). That's 200 books just about OBEs.

My earlier OBE studies culminated in the publication of my first book, Out of Body Experiences: How to have them and what to expect (Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997). So I guess you could literally say I wrote the book on how to induce OBEs.

My first book has been available for free on my website (www.robertpeterson.org) since 1995—two years before its publication—to prove I'm not "in it for the money." I also have a free blog called "The OBE Outlook on Life" available at obeoutlook.blogspot.com in which I offer free OBE advice and OBE book reviews.

I should also state unequivocally: Although I do have a B.S. (Bachelor of Science) degree from the University of Minnesota, Institute of Technology, my degree is in computer science, not neuroscience. I am an "experiencer," but I've spent a considerable amount of time studying neuroscience, the brain, and the psychology of OBEs. I've spent many long nights reading scientific articles, papers, and books, striving to understand the

mechanics of the brain and OBEs.

**What is an OBE?**

There is a wide variety of confusing terminology and definitions when it comes to OBEs. People often ask, "This happened to me; was it an OBE or something else?" It can be a touchy subject, but one we need to address. In Lessons Out of the Body I devoted an entire chapter to the confusing terminology. [2] I caught some hell for it, too. Dr. Albert Taylor, author of Soul Traveler , was angry because I wrote that the term "Soul Travel" should be reserved for practitioners of Eckankar, who claim their "soul travel" is somehow different from normal OBEs. It also implies the existence of a "soul" which has not been scientifically proven. I never questioned the validity of Dr. Taylor's OBEs (nor anyone else's); I just prefer a connotation-free taxonomy that doesn't alienate anyone, including scientists and theologians.

Some groups, such as the IAC (International Academy of Consciousness [3] ) carry this to the other extreme, creating dozens of new terms—a detailed scientific nomenclature—related to the study of OBEs, which similarly alienates many people who have a hard time relating what they've experienced.

For the purposes of this book, I define an OBE as a fully conscious experience in which your entire awareness **seems** to be separated from your physical body. In other words, your body seems to be just another inanimate object in the room. Parapsychologist, author, and hardened skeptic Susan Blackmore is quick to remind us of John Palmer's assertion that the "experience" of being out doesn't mean that you are out. [4] While it' hard to convince an experiencer otherwise, that has yet to be scientifically proven. In this book, I want to avoid such conjecture.

OBEs are not the same thing as "remote viewing" (RV)

either. With RV, your conscious awareness remains inside your body, even if you claim to perceive what's happening at remote locations (physical or non-physical).

One could argue that body awareness and/or control (or lack of it) should not invalidate OBEs since experiencers can take a variable amount of lucidity into an OBE. I don't want to nit-pick over degrees of lucidity. I want to keep this book and its definitions as cut and dried as possible. I want to draw a line between OBEs and remote viewing, which are qualitatively very different.

**I've heard about near-death experiences (NDEs); are they the same thing?**

Not exactly. An OBE is a typical **feature** of an NDE, bu you don't need to be near death to have an out-of-body experience. NDEs also have other common features, like a life-review, that are not typically seen in ordinary OBEs. Some typical NDE features, like seeing a bright light, a tunnel, and meeting with dead relatives may also be experienced in an OBE, but it's more rare.

**Are OBEs all inside the brain?**

The popular media would certainly have you believe OBEs are all inside the brain, but most OBE authors argue the opposite: "Seeing is believing." The rare exception is Michael Raduga, who seems to dismiss the idea of the "non-physical" as unreasonable. [5] Whether they are or aren't has not been proven to the satisfaction of both sides. I think it's more accurate to say that even our normal (physical) perceptions aren't "in the body" at all. It's more accurate to say we have a "story of experience" that is basically a fiction we tell ourselves during every waking moment. More on that later. I personally believe there is a non-physical component (and enough evidence from Remote Viewing to prove

it), but science is a long way from understanding it. Of course, that could all change with a quantum leap of thinking.

**Are OBEs real?**

I'm not interested in speculating whether OBEs are "real" or have any perception of the physical world. That's beyond the scope of this book. If you want that, I recommend the free e-book Consciousness Beyond the Body edited by Alexander De Foe, to which I've donated a chapter that examines some of the hard evidence. [6] An experience is an experience, regardless of our interpretation, and therefore they are worth studying.

**Are there other types of OBE?**

I wouldn't have said this a couple years ago, but surprisingly, the answer is: Yes there are. It's all a matter of interpretation. OBEs have been reported throughout human history, and the interpretation varies from person to person. Some describe more "heavy," "dense," or "foggy" experiences that resemble the physical world. They see what appears to be their bedroom or another physical location. In occult literature, they're called "etheric projections" on the premise that we have a semi-physical "etheric" body (or "energy body") that may be used as a vehicle of consciousness. They're also called "real-time zone" experiences. Others describe OBEs that are more "airy," "light" or "clear" that seem to have no relationship whatsoever to the physical world. Occultists call these "astral projections" on the premise that we employ a non-physical "astral body" to visit the "astral plane."

In my first book, I treated these two types of OBEs as the same thing. As I said before, there aren't exactly announcers or signs over the doorways saying you're now entering the astral plane. It's more like you feel a shift in consciousness and find

yourself in an unfamiliar location. Words like "astral" and "etheric" just cloud our scientific understanding with unnecessary connotations.

There are also "focus level" experiences that are called OBEs by authors like Bruce Moen, Rosalind McKnight, Tom Campbell, and other proponents of The Monroe Institute, including Robert Monroe himself. With "focus level" experiences, the subject retains at least some awareness of his or her physical body, so by my definition, they're different from what I call an OBE in this book. Some describe them as more like remote viewing but others seem to have no awareness of their physical body, but when they make an effort to speak, their physical body talks, which allows them to narrate the experience.

I've also personally had experiences in which my complete awareness suddenly seems to shift to a new location with complete lucidity, with no exit symptoms. For example, one minute I'll be meditating in my recliner in my living room, and in an instant—without any kind of induction technique, blackout, or transition symptoms—I'll suddenly find myself standing in a breathtaking vista with full conscious (or even hyper-conscious) awareness. This is also a type of OBE, but since it differs in quality and symptoms from my other OBEs, for the purposes of this book, it doesn't count.

Again, I'm not trying to invalidate, belittle, or marginalize anyone's experiences. I'm just trying to limit the scope of this book to one type of OBE.

**How many OBEs have you had?**

I don't know exactly. I quit counting my OBEs sometime in the early 1990s when I was still in the three-hundreds. (It's no coincidence that I was married in 1992!) There were several years where life got busy and regretfully, I neglected my

OBE journals altogether.

**Are OBEs a pathology or psychological problem? Should I see a psychiatrist?**

After their first OBE, many people question their sanity, especially if it was spontaneous and unplanned. In 1984, two professional psychiatrists, Dr. Glen Gabbard and Dr. Stuart Twemlow published an excellent book, With the Eyes of the Mind, that tried to answer the question of whether OBEs were related to other well-known psychological conditions, such as:
Autoscopy (aka "doppelganger" phenomenon)
Depersonalization (where it seems like it's not you acting)
Schizophrenia (hallucinations and delusions, etc.)
Lucid dreams (dreams in which you are fully conscious and aware that you're dreaming)
Other body-boundary disturbances.

The book provided a detailed and scientific comparison of OBEs to each of these things. Like good scientists, the authors refused to speculate what OBEs are, but the bottom line is that they're not related to any of these things. The vast majority of OBEs happen to normal, healthy, happy, well-adjusted people of all ages. OBEs don't favor any particular age, gender, location, religion, or belief system, and they've been reported throughout human history. It's a universal phenomenon.

**What's the fastest, easiest way to have an OBE?**

There is no good answer for this. Every OBE author has their own favorite method of induction, and they all have some merit. The good news is that many of the techniques have things in common, which tells us the best practices. The secrets of their success are often not in the actual exit technique but in the preparations, habits, and ancillary tips. The problem is that

everybody is unique. We've all got our own stubborn in-the-body programming to overcome. What works for one person often doesn't work for another. So you need to try different techniques to find out what works best for you. Some OBE books actually suggest you try an OBE technique for two to three weeks, and if it doesn't work, try another and repeat this until you're successful.

**Can't you visit me and just pull me out-of-body?**

I've tried to pull people out-of-body, but it never works. Sometimes the person remembers vague dreams of me trying to pry them out-of-body, but they protested, "No! I'm not ready yet!" and similar. Maybe I lack the skill to do it, but even if I was successful at pulling someone out-of-body, they still wouldn't be conscious and have complete lucidity. No one can do that for you. I'm not alone in this belief. Robert Bruce, author of Astral Dynamics , has tried and failed. [7] The same goes for William Buhlman, author of Adventures Beyond the Body and others. [8] Of course, a scientist convinced OBEs are an anomaly of the brain would say it's impossible.

**I've been trying to achieve OBE for years. How will this book help?**

I get a lot of emails that say the same thing: "I've been trying to achieve an out-of-body experience (OBE) for two years, but still can't get out. What am I doing wrong?" I usually ask them, "What have you tried so far and what was the result?" They usually reply, "I do [some particular technique], but it doesn't work." I think to myself, "You've been doing the same thing over and over for two years? That right there may be your problem. You've got to change it up and try new things."

This book will help because it will provide a wide variety of OBE techniques, and explain the science and theory

behind them. It's still up to you to do the work.

**Isn't science at odds with OBEs? Isn't it physical versus non-physical?**

No. Although many scientists insist OBEs are nothing more than an anomaly of the brain, that doesn't mean it's at odds with science itself. That kind of prejudice is exactly why science has not devoted enough resources to study it properly. An experience has value and is still worth studying scientifically, regardless of whether it's a purely physical anomaly or something "non-physical."

**How did you get into this obscure topic?**

I first started studying out-of-body experiences (OBEs) in 1979, at the age of 18, after I read the book Journeys Out of the Body by Robert Monroe, founder of The Monroe Institute. I was extremely skeptical of his claims. In fact, I didn't believe a word he said. But as any good student of science, I kept an open mind and conducted my own investigation. Monroe said not to take his word for it, but to try it yourself, so that's exactly what I did. I tried his "Lines of Force" technique, which I give in chapter 4.

**Can science help me induce OBEs?**

I think it can, but first we must put on our "scientist" hat, and temporarily set aside our preconceptions and "otherworldly" assumptions about the OBE. That doesn't mean other worlds and "astral planes" don't exist. It just means that to leverage science for OBEs, we should temporarily see OBEs the way a scientist does. Let's temporarily assume OBEs are a function hardwired into the human brain and see what we can learn from studying it. Again, if you're a "believer" or "experiencer" like me, don't get upset: my statement does **not** imply OBEs are "all in your head." It simply means that humans might have natural inclination

toward OBEs built into their brains, like an "OBE preset" to tune in like a radio.

**H ow did our brains evolve to include the OBE?**

This is all conjecture, of course, but my theory is that in order to survive, our ancient hominid ancestors were forced to move from their native Africa to harsher climates when food became scarce. Their evolutionary strategy was based on intelligence: their larger brains pushed them away from instinct, and more toward intellect in order to survive in these new climates. But maybe their increased intelligence also gave them insight into the futility and hopelessness of life: we struggle to eat, drink, mate, survive, but in the end everyone dies anyway. Maybe OBEs, near-death experiences (NDEs), and other mystical states gave them a badly needed coping mechanism; a defense against defeatism. Maybe survival of the fittest naturally selected humans who could cope with the hopelessness because of a belief in an afterlife. Not just belief, but an "experience" of it: the OBE. And maybe natural selection also made these experiences rare and hard to obtain because if people got too distracted by an experience of the afterlife, they wouldn't pay enough attention to their survival.

**Can anyone have OBEs? Are some people predisposed to OBEs?**

In the past, I've always said anyone can learn to induce OBEs; if they can happen to me, they can happen to anyone. I never felt predisposed to them, and I never had them until I started trying. Still, some people just seem to be born with a natural talent for, or inclination toward, OBEs, just like some people are better subjects for hypnosis. (And these may actually be related).

While there may be people who are just too resistant, there's a lot you can do to make yourself an ideal candidate for

OBEs, and that's where we begin to leverage science.

[2] Lessons Out of the Body , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2001, chapter 19, "The Continuum of Consciousness."

[3] The IAC is a 501c3 non-profit organization based on the work of OBE author Waldo Vieira. They teach out-of-body experiences and explorations of consciousness.

[4] Mind Beyond the Body: The Mystery of ESP Projection , John Palmer via D. Scott Rogo, Penguin Books, 1978, Rogo, pg. 35.

[5] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 228.

[6] Consciousness Beyond the Body, Alexander De Foe, 2016, chapter 5.

[7] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 277. "I do not believe it is possible to directly assist another person out of body. I have tried many times and it does not seem to be feasible."

[8] Buhlman mentioned this in a conversation during one of his OBE Intensive classes at The Monroe Institute.

# Chapter 2. Becoming an Ideal Candidate for OBEs

Can we use science to transform ourselves into ideal (or at least better) candidates for OBEs? I believe the answer is yes. We start by examining what scientists know about the people who are predisposed to OBEs. Then we change our habits to "reprogram" our brains for OBE using a concept neuroscientists called neuroplasticity: the brain's ability to rewire itself.

There are two kinds of OBE habits we can develop: habits that make OBEs more likely to occur (which I'll talk about throughout the entire book), and habits to make you a better candidate for OBEs, which I'll cover now. There are also bad habits you should break (like watching too much television) but we'll get into that later.

**Meditate Daily**

The first way to become a better candidate for OBEs is to meditate daily. There are literally hundreds of meditation techniques, and all of them can make you a better candidate for OBEs.

In a way, direct OBE induction itself is a very specific kind of meditation where you focus your mind in a certain way (more about that in chapter 17). Some OBE authors achieve their OBEs entirely through meditation. For example, pretty much all of Jurgen Ziewe's OBEs were the result of his meditation, even though his goal in meditating wasn't specifically for that (he was after more lofty goals like Nirvana, Satori, oneness with God, or whatever you want to call it.)

While it's important to practice OBE techniques, that's not what I mean here. Here I want to talk about "normal" meditation; the kind where you just sit quietly, clear your mind and

still your thoughts. For example, one of the most simple and powerful meditation techniques is "mindfulness meditation" in which you simply sit and cultivate a focused awareness on the present moment, and extend a loving awareness toward others.

I usually meditate twice a day: A fifteen-to-twenty minute silent "mindfulness" meditation early in the morning after I wake up, and a "binaural beat" meditation under headphones in the evening. I'll go into more details about that and other sound technologies in chapter 65.

There's ample scientific evidence that meditation rewires your brain. For example, a 2014 article in the Huffington Post [9] talks about the work of psychiatrist Dr. Dan Siegel, executive director of the Mindsight Institute. According to the article:

> "As Siegel explained, the concept of 'neural integration' refers to the interaction between various disparate parts of the brain. And through mindfulness practices like meditation, we can actually grow integrative fibers in the brain -- studies have shown that mindful awareness increases the connectivity of separate areas of the brain."

Can that make you a better candidate for OBEs? Everything I know about OBEs says yes. Of course, that doesn't guarantee that you'll have OBEs. Renown skeptic Dr. Susan Blackmore has meditated every day for more than 30 years, and she claims it hasn't helped her induce any OBEs. So think of meditation as just one piece of the puzzle.

**Strengthen your active imagination**

Another thing science tells us is that OBEs happen more often to creative people, people who use their imaginations.

In other words, people who focus on "inner events" more than "outer events." In terms of brain science, they spend a lot of time on "task negative" brain events (mind-wandering, daydreaming) and less time on "task positive" brain events (focused tasks). In terms of neuroscience, this means they exercise, or even over-use, the "default mode network" (DMN) which I'll cover in more detail in chapter 72.

A lot of people tell me, "I used to have OBEs when I was a child, but then they stopped." So what changed? Why do children have more OBEs? I believe it's because they use their active imagination more than adults. Kids use their active imagination constantly. I once read an article about a 9-year-old girl who could self-induce OBEs. Someone asked her how she did it. She said something like, "It's easy. Just pretend you're on a roller-coaster, then try to move but don't really move. Eventually, you'll start to get faster and faster, and you'll actually feel like you're shaking. At some point, you'll just pop out of your body." She figured out that using her active imagination while she's relaxed is a key factor. Her instruction to "move but don't really move" sounds very much like an OBE technique I developed called the "Almost Move Technique" which I explain in chapter 30.

As we get older, our brains and belief systems tend to, for lack of a better word, "solidify" and become more rigid. Our brains develop habitual patterns (think of them as ruts) and we use our active imagination less. So the first step is to break out of these ruts.

The more you use your active imagination, the easier it will be to achieve OBEs. In my first book, I have an exercise called "Pretend Day." [10] The whole point was to get you to use your active imagination as much as you can by pretending weird things happen. For example, imagine you pull out a gun and shoot a

stoplight that's holding you back. Or pretend there are purple dragons circling in the sky above you, or balls of light encircling your head. It doesn't matter what you fantasize about; just that you do fantasize.

So to become a better candidate for OBEs, make every day "pretend day." Learn to actively engage in playful fantasy. Don't consider this a waste of time; consider it a necessary part of rewiring your brain for it.

**Develop absorption**

Science tells us one of the most important attributes of OBE-susceptible people is absorption. [11] I wrote about this in my second book. [12] Absorption, as measured by the Tellegen Absorption Scale (TAS), is how absorbed people get in their own mental imagery, or how focused they are on inner events. According to scientists, people who rate high on the TAS also tend to be more easily hypnotized. They're also typically better at an important OBE skill: visualization. Absorption is also strongly correlated with openness to experience. (This may suggest drugs used to treat ADD might help you focus more on OBEs.) So another way to rewire your brain for OBEs is to develop absorption.

Many scientists seem to treat absorption and suggestibility as a static and unchanging trait, but I know of at least two ways to develop absorption. The first is to read (or write) fiction stories and books. I especially favor science fiction and fantasy novels that conjure up images of strange new worlds and the creatures that inhabit them, like elves, trolls and gnomes. You can lose yourself and become absorbed in a television show or a movie, but they don't have the same effect because they feed your brain with both visual and auditory data: there's not much

creativity left for the viewer. They lead you by the nose and tell you exactly what to think and feel. When you read fiction, you do something different: you create a mental image of the events occurring in the story.

As you read, try to imagine the faces of the people in the story. Try to visualize their circumstances. Try to become absorbed into the story's plot to the exclusion of everything else in the outside world. Again, this is not a waste of time; it's a technique to rewire your brain.

The second way to develop absorption is to listen to music. I'm not talking about background music; that's actually counterproductive. Listen intently, under headphones. Don't combine it with anything else. Put your phone down and give it your full attention. Try to get totally lost in the music. Focus on its ups and downs, and how the music makes you feel. It's better to listen to instrumental songs rather than songs with lyrics. Some genres of music are more conducive to this process than others. For example, as appealing as they might be to you, Country and Folk music might be poor choices for this because they tend to emphasize stories conveyed in words, using the music only to emphasize the story. Classical / Baroque music emphasizes the music only, which is better for this purpose. It's is highly creative and can drag you up and down in wonderful ways. Unfortunately, I find most Classical music boring, so I tend to favor music with some lyrics, but where the music overpowers the lyrics, and not the other way around. I like long progressive rock songs by Yes that are heavy on music, with lyrics that are nothing more than poetry (like "Close To The Edge"), or the earlier, more progressive songs by Pink Floyd (like "Echoes.") I also listen to progressive metal that's music-heavy (like Dream Theater), and symphonic metal (like Epica). Bands that are "trippy" like "Dead Can Dance" are also good for getting entranced. I'll talk more about OBE music

in chapter 53.

**Develop Synaesthesia: Bleed-thru of the senses**

People who use hallucinogenic drugs like LSD, psilocybin, or cannabis often "hear" colors or "see" shapes in sounds. The technical term for when the senses bleed together like this is synaesthesia, and it's not confined to hallucinogenic experiences. I bring this up because according to scientists, there's a high correlation between people who experience synaesthesia and people who rate high on the Tellegen Absorption Scale.

What I'd like to suggest is that while you listen to music, try to **visualize** its ups and downs. Some music apps made for phones and computers have a "visualization" mode that changes colorful patterns on the display with the music. Close your eyes and try to do that in your head. Again, I'll talk more about that in chapter 53.

Visualizing music is like practicing or developing a kind of self-induced synaesthesia, which increases your level of absorption to more easily achieve OBEs.

**Play Video Games**

Scientists have known for a long time that people who play video games tend to have more OBEs. That's because video games train you to change your focus from the body's five physical senses to a computerized experience, an alternate "story of experience," which is a subject I'll cover in the next chapter. The same goes for virtual reality (VR) apps and games, or drones that feed real-time video data to a VR mask.

**Engage in Creative Activities**

People who have mystical experiences are often more creative. So one of the things you can do to bolster your creativity is to draw, doodle, or paint (without a template). If you're more

auditory than visual, you can try to compose music. Another exercise is to make up gibberish nonsense sentences. [13] In my book Answers Within I give lots of different exercises designed to teach you how to get your subconscious to communicate, and since the subconscious is usually the source of creativity, many of them are helpful exercises for OBEs as well. For example:

Ask yourself, "If I was a guru on top the mountain, (or the Dalai Lama, Jesus, or some other wise person), how would I answer this question?"

Ask yourself, "What is love?" and try to make up a "wise answer."

Ask yourself to "Say something wise" and think up the wisest thing you can imagine.

Go on a "metaphor walk" and ask yourself the "meaning" of the things you see. For example, "What's the meaning of this street light?"

Look at people and try to guess their story: "Where did she grow up?" "What's his favorite sport?" "What will she be doing when she's 85 years old and what will she look like?"

**Keep a Dream Journal**

People who keep a dream journal are more prone to having (and remembering) out-of-body experiences. When you keep a dream journal, it trains your brain to retain a small thread of awareness during sleep. It learns to pay attention to what happens (your "story of experience") while you're dissociated from your body, and to carry those memories across the boundary between waking and sleeping. I'll talk about this more in depth in chapter 60.

**Lose Some Weight**

If you're overweight, it might help to trim up and lose some weight. I've always had better luck when my weight is down. I'll go into more details about that in chapter 71.

If you're a left-brained logical thinker like me, it may seem unproductive, tedious, uninteresting or unappealing to spend hours engaging your creative mind, daydreaming, reading, playing video games and such, but they will make you a better candidate for OBEs.

Don't do any of these exercises halfheartedly or they simply won't work. A single event, like reading a novel, may exercise the right neural pathways, but it won't rewire your brain unless you do it repeatedly. It's a lot like physical exercise: you won't develop strong muscles by going to the gym (or biking, hiking, etc.) once a month. You've got to develop a habit and keep at it. Every time you do it, the neural pathways get stronger, making you a better and better candidate for OBEs. And of course, you also need to give it some time to take effect. Experts say it takes 21 days to form a habit.

Whether you're naturally a good candidate for OBEs, or became one with these exercises, that may still not be enough to attain them because you still need to tweak your brain to make it happen. First, we need science to tell us what happens to the brain during an OBE, then we can develop exercises to replicate that. That's the subject of the next chapter.

[9] What Neuroscience Can Teach Us About Compassion , Carolyn Gregoire, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-neuroscience-can-tea_n_5268853

[10] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, pg. 40.

[11] Seeing Myself , Susan Blackmore, Robinson, 2017, pg. 117.

[12] Lessons Out of the Body , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2001, pg. 221.

[13] How Enlightenment Changes Your Brain , Andrew Newberg and Mark

Robert Waldman, Penguin Random House, 2016, pg. 124.

# Chapter 3. The Science of OBEs, the PFC, and the TPJ

If out-of-body experiences are a hardwired preset in the brain, where is the trigger mechanism? To understand that, we first need to know some basics about the brain.

The human brain is a very complex thing and scientists are still a long way from understanding most of its mysteries. Still, what they do know is amazing. I don't want to bore you with too many details, so I'm just going to give you some basics. This book is about OBEs, not the brain, so hopefully brain experts reading this will forgive my gross oversimplification.

Except for the pineal gland (which we'll talk about later), the brain is divided into two halves called hemispheres. Each half has an inner core called the limbic system (a lot of which deals with emotions), and an outer section called the cerebrum or cortex (a lot of which does the analytic thinking). Think of the cortex as the brain's CPUs or data processors (it's actually more like a lot of cores). Each cortex has four main sections called lobes:

Frontal lobe – Cognitive functions and control of activity.
Occipital lobe – Mainly used for processing vision and routing the data to other areas.
Parietal lobe – Processes information about the senses (somatosensory cortex), temperature, taste, touch, and movement.
Temporal lobe – Processes auditory perception (hearing), language, and memories.

Neuroscientists have identified two main areas of the brain important to OBEs: An area of the frontal lobe called the

Prefrontal Cortex (PFC), and the Temporoparietal Junction (TPJ) which is located on the cortex where the temporal and parietal lobes meet.

**Prefrontal Cortex (PFC)**

The PFC is located in the front part of the brain. Brain experts like Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman suggest that most mystical experiences—enlightenment experiences, automatic writing, channeling, mediumship, speaking in tongues, and transcendence—occur when there's a rapid and profound drop in neural activity in the PFC. [14] That includes enlightenment experiences, automatic writing, channeling, mediumship, speaking in tongues, and transcendence. They apparently didn't study OBEs, but another study done by Japanese researchers did. They used an instrument called near infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) that measures blood flow to the outer parts of the brain to study brain activity during OBEs, and they found the same thing: brain blood flow was decreased to the prefrontal cortex (PFC) during an OBE. [15]

This is important. It means we can induce profound experiences like OBEs by first increasing neural activity to the PFC (for example, with slow movements like Tai Chi), then dropping the activity rapidly (for example, by yawning and deep relaxation). More about that later.

A similar drop in neural activity occurs to an area that sits behind the PFC called the Medial Prefrontal Cortex (mPFC) when you take hallucinogenic drugs like psilocybin, the psychoactive ingredient in "magic mushrooms." The lower the blood flow to the mPFC and another region called the posterior cingulate cortex (PCC), the harder you trip. Unfortunately, since fNIRS doesn't show us as deep into the brain as the mPFC or the PCC, we don't know how they were affected in Yasuhiro Inui and

Hideyuki Kokubo's study.

Tweaking the PFC is only half the battle. To induce OBEs we also need to shift our sense of spacial location away from the physical body, and our sense perception away from the physical senses. That's where the temporoparietal junction (TPJ) comes in.

**Temporoparietal Junction (TPJ)**

Neuroscientists believe our spacial location and orientation (which is called proprioception) are determined by an area of the brain called the Temporoparietal Junction (TPJ for short). Figure 1 shows where the right side TPJ (rTPJ) is located on the brain's outer cortex.

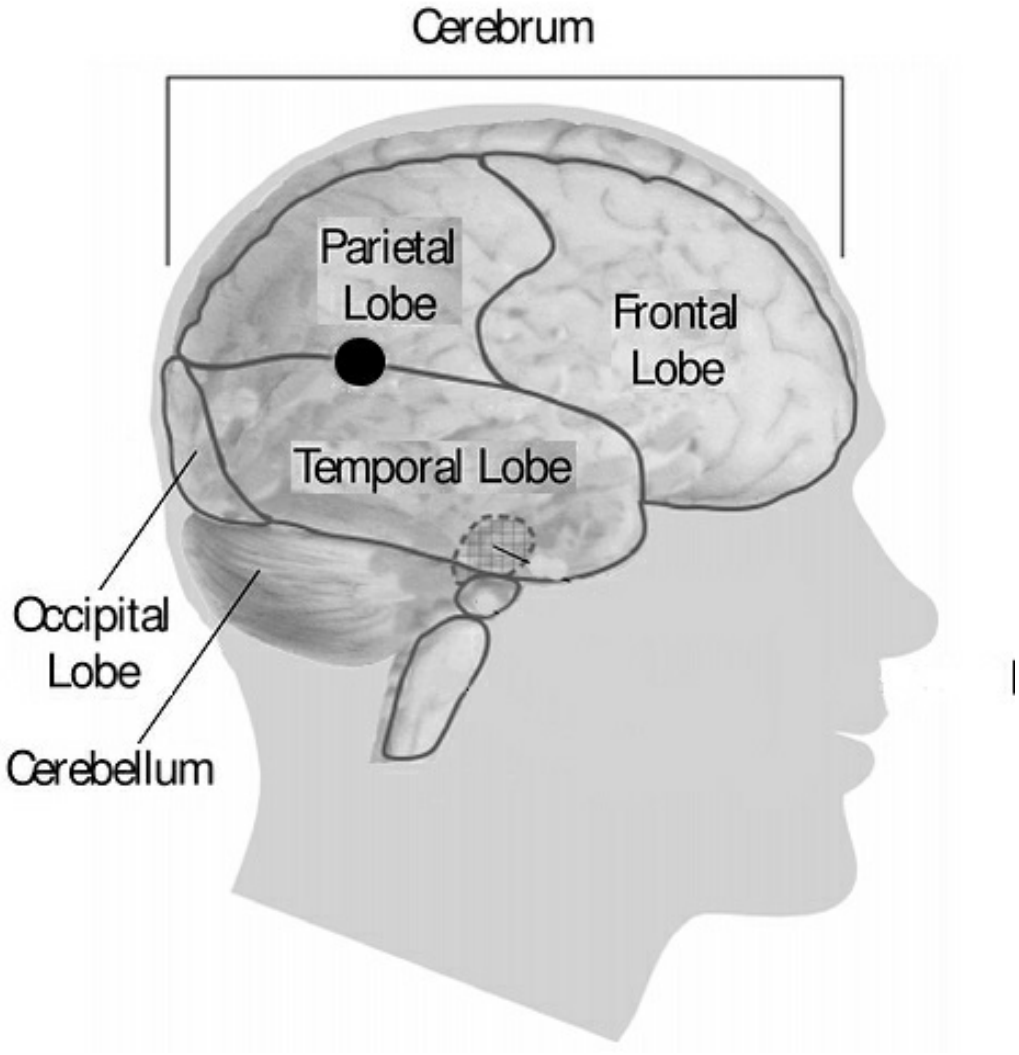



Figure 1. Temporoparietal Junction (TPJ)

We know about the relationship between the TPJ and

proprioception from experiments done on the brain while trying to help people with epilepsy. In the 1930s, before modern epilepsy drugs were invented, Canadian neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield was trying to help a woman who had seizures. When trying to locate the source of her seizures, he opened up her skull and exposed a section of her brain. When he stimulated a part of her right temporal lobe with a probe, she cried out, "Oh God! I am leaving my body." [16] He didn't document exactly where he had touched, but it was likely the rTPJ.

Some 70 years later, around 2002, neuroscientist Olaf Blanke was helping another woman with epilepsy. In trying to locate the area responsible for triggering her seizures, he opened up her skull and inserted a grid of subdural electrodes (beneath the brain's outer membrane). He systematically sent tiny electric currents to different areas of the grid. Since the brain has no pain receptors, she was awake and described what she felt. When he applied mild electrical stimulation to the rTPJ, she became disoriented and lost her sense of spacial location.

Later, Dr. Michael Persinger, and his colleague Stanley Koren took a different approach. They applied transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) to the brain, which uses magnetic fields to create tiny electric impulses inside the brain. They focused on an area of the rTPJ called the Angular Gyrus and got results similar to Blanke. After a lot of investigation they developed the "Koren helmet" (aka the "God helmet") that seems to induce mystical states by stimulating the brain's rTPJ through the skull. This is basically a snowmobile helmet with weak solenoids attached. [17] Needless to say, this is a lot less invasive and doesn't require anyone to drill holes in your skull.

I shouldn't need to say this, but **do not try any of this at home** . There are two problems: first, the brain is a very delicate

organ, so experimenting on it is very dangerous unless you're a qualified neuroscientist (with a degree) and know exactly what you're doing. Second, I'm not convinced that what they produced were really OBEs in the true sense of the word. [18] Still, I think the connection between the rTPJ and our sense of spacial location is compelling.

There is some evidence to suggest that the left-side TPJ (lTPJ) does a job similar to the rTPJ, but there's a difference: the lTPJ contains a language area of the brain known as Wernicke's area, which seems to be responsible for translating "mentalese" into language. The connection between the lTPJ and mental translation is interesting, considering that I started communicating with my "inner voice" shortly after starting my OBE experiments, as I wrote in chapter 10 of my first book. But that's beyond the scope of this book.

I believe the TPJs do their job of deciding spacial orientation by compiling information from the physical senses. Since they sit where the temporal and parietal lobes meet, the TPJs have easy access to the touch data from the parietal lobe and the auditory data from the temporal lobe. Visual data comes primarily from the occipital lobe and from there is routed to many different locations, including the medial parietal lobe and other places like the limbic system. Although they are used, the senses of taste and smell don't seem to play a major part in the TPJ's decision-making process. It relies more heavily on the three senses of sight, sound, and touch. It polls the senses, then passes the data through three filters: our circumstances, beliefs, and assumptions. From all that, the brain formulates two things: a body schema ("this is me"), and a "story of experience" ("This is what's happening to me.") Although we all have TPJs on both sides of our brain, for convenience sake, I'm going to start referring to them as

just one coordinated thing: the TPJ.

**Body Image and Body Schema**

Most books on OBEs and astral projection assume the existence of an "astral body" or at least a non-physical body, and that's exactly how it feels. Notable exceptions are Michael Raduga's book The Phase and Frederick Aardema's book Explorations In Consciousness . Science has never found evidence of an "non-physical body" but it has found ample evidence of a "body image" and "body schema."

Many people refer to the "body image" and "body schema" as the same thing, but to neuroscientists, they are different concepts. Your "body image" refers to your physical appearance; how you think others see you, how your body looks, how attractive you are, etc. Your "body schema" refers to the model you have of your own body, what its muscles are doing, its posture, actions, position in space, how big your limbs are, and so forth. Your body schema is constantly updated by the TPJ based on the sense data it receives.

**The Rubber Hand Illusion**

There's a well-known experiment in psychology called the "rubber hand" illusion in which scientists can easily alter a person's body schema. First they use a screen to hide the subject's real arm and hand from sight, and put a rubber arm and hand where it's visible. In other words, they replace the normal visual data fed to the TPJ about the arm and hand with a reasonable facsimile.

Next, they stroke or touch both the real arm and fake arm simultaneously with a brush for several minutes. In other words, they also replace the arm's sense of touch with a facsimile. After replacing the two primary senses of sight and touch with

facsimiles, the subject's TPJ gladly accepts the change in body schema, believing that the rubber hand is the real hand. The brain makes this substitution despite the fact that the subject knows intellectually that it's not his or her real hand. In terms of neuroscience, the brain's frontal lobe can firmly believe it's a fake hand, but the TPJ overrides the knowledge with the fake body schema.

Then the scientists either stab, burn or otherwise threaten the rubber hand, and the subject jumps or flinches like it's his or her real hand. What's remarkable is that it only takes data from two of the five senses to change the body schema this way: sight and touch. It's also remarkably fast.

**How Neuroscientists Induce an OBE**

Scientists carried this experiment further. They asked the subject to put on Virtual Reality (VR) goggles that simply showed him or her a displaced image of their own physical body taken from above or behind with a video camera. Then they tapped the real body on the back while simultaneously changing the VR image to make it look like the displaced body was also tapped. In other words, they did the same "rubber hand" illusion, but instead of using facsimiles of the arm, they displaced the entire body. The result was an out-of-body experience, at least until the TPJ figured out the trickery and reintegrated its displaced body schema. If you acquire enough hardware, you could do the same thing, but the OBE probably won't last long. There's still a missing piece.

**Story of Experience**

The "story of experience" is a story (some would say a "fiction") your brain's TPJ tells you, which you then call "reality." When the three primary senses of sight, sound, and touch are

distorted, the TPJ correspondingly adjusts your "story of experience."

A 2018 BBC News article talked about a woman, Kirsty James, who was diagnosed with Stargardt disease, a rare disease that caused her eyesight to deteriorate. [19] As she lost her sight, her TPJ began filling in the blanks with nonsense, producing very realistic hallucinations. At first she thought she was going mad, but it turns out her TPJ was just changing her "story of experience." [20]

It's also important to note that your brain is adept at switching to a new story of experience. It does it every single night: it's called dreaming (and yes, we all do it).

**The three filters: circumstances, beliefs, assumptions**

When I say the TPJ filters the sense data through your circumstances, I mean things like "I'm lying down" or "I'm swimming." You can easily change this story and imagine other circumstances just as easily as telling yourself the truth. People are experts at fooling themselves! The beliefs and assumptions used by the TPJ to filter the sensory data are things like: "I'm traveling this direction and this speed" and "gravity affects me this way."

The important thing to remember with regard to inducing OBEs is this: The less data the TPJ gets from these three primary senses of sight, sound, and touch, the more it needs to rely upon the circumstances, beliefs and assumptions to formulate its story of experience. And those things can be fabricated using your imagination.

To the brain, there's very little difference between experience and imagination. The body responds to imagination much like actual experience. Inner events and outer events are treated the same way. [21] In fact, they're treated so similarly that your body is forced to paralyze itself during sleep so you don't act

out your dreams (I'll cover the subject of sleep paralysis in chapter 7).

**The Trick to Induce an OBE**

So the trick to induce an OBE is to force your brain's TPJ to assume a new "story of experience" by first muting (or reducing to a trickle) the senses of sight, sound, and touch, then using your imagination to override the circumstances, beliefs and assumptions. In so doing, you force it out of its ordinary "in the body" story of experience and assume a new one: an out-of-body experience.

Once the TPJ is tricked out of its normal paradigm, you're automatically pulled into an OBE. From there, you stop using your imagination and return to a more normal state of mind, ready to explore. Think of it this way: Your TPJ points a flashlight (or "torch" if you're British) at the physical senses, so you experience only what is illuminated there. You need to trick it to point another way in order to explore in other directions (or as some would say, dimensions).

A good example of how to do this is Robert Monroe's "Lines of Force" technique, which is the subject of the next chapter.

[14] How Enlightenment Changes Your Brain , Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman, Penguin Random House, 2016, pg. 204.

[15] Measuring Brain Blood Flow Change by fNIRS during an Out-of-Body Experience , Yasuhiro Inui and Hideyuki Kokubo (2009).

[16] The Twenty-ninth Maudsley lecture, Journal of Mental Science, 101, Penfield 1955, pg. 458.

[17] The Koren helmet is, however, completely different in technology from TMS. It generates around 1 microTesla fields, whereas TMS uses magnetic

fields on the order of one million times stronger.

[18] Electrical stimulation disrupts the rTPJ's interpretation of reality, but it lacks the crucial step of building a new interpretation based on a different set of data.

[19] 'I thought I was losing my mind, but I was actually losing my sight' , 06 April 2018, by Sarah McDermott, http://www.bbc.com/news/stories-43306441

[20] There's also an anomaly of the eye of which many people aren't aware: there's a "hole" in the vision of both eyes where the optic nerve connects. The brain extrapolates visual data and fills in this hole so we perceive one unified picture of reality, when there's really a "hole" for each eye you don't "see." Even if you close one eye, you won't see the hole.

[21] For example, if an average man vividly imagines a naked woman, his body automatically responds with a very physical reaction: sexual arousal and sometimes an erection.

# Chapter 4. Robert Monroe's Lines of Force Technique

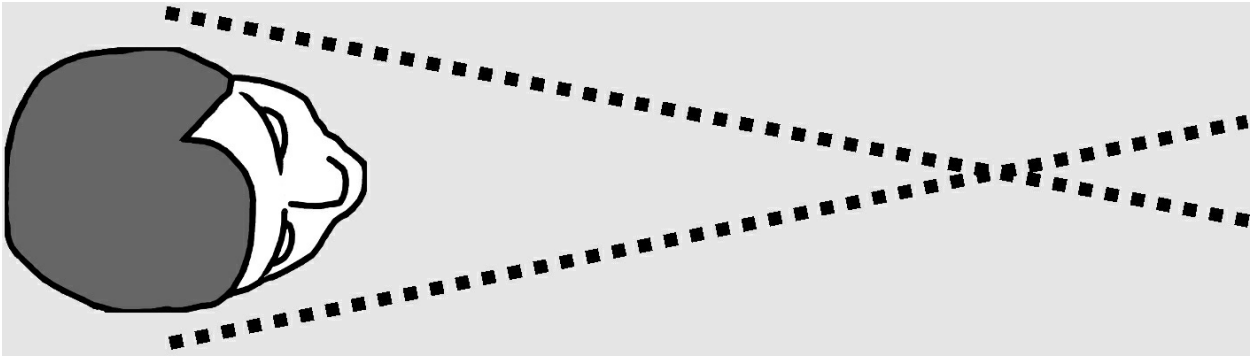
At this point, many readers will be antsy to learn some OBE techniques, so I'm going to just dive right in and give you an example. This is only one of **many** OBE techniques in this book.

In his first book, Robert Monroe gave an OBE induction procedure: his "Lines of Force" technique. [22] It's the first technique I ever tried, and I got immediate results. I don't know if I interpreted his instructions correctly (by all means, read it yourself), but I followed this procedure:

Go to bed early, so you're not tired.
Lie down, face up, arms at your side or resting on your hips, with your eyes closed.
Relax your body completely. If possible, relax to the point where you cannot feel your body.
Allow yourself to drift down close to the boundary between waking and sleeping.
Try to hold your mind as blank (empty—devoid of thoughts and emotions) as you can.
Visualize two lines of force positioned slightly away from both temples (just outside your ears), that cross one foot (one third meter) directly in front of your face, at eye level. (Figure 1) Hold that steady for about 10 seconds.

Figure 1 – Lines of force cross at 1 foot (1/3m)

Imagine the lines want to pull away from one another, so it requires force to keep them crossed.
Once you visualize that clearly, extend the lines out so their crossing point is 3 feet (1 meter) in front of you. Since the



intersection is farther out, they make a sharper angle. Imagine more force is needed to keep them crossed. Make sure to keep your body relaxed. Hold that. (Figure 2)

Figure 2 – Lines of force cross at 3 feet (1m)

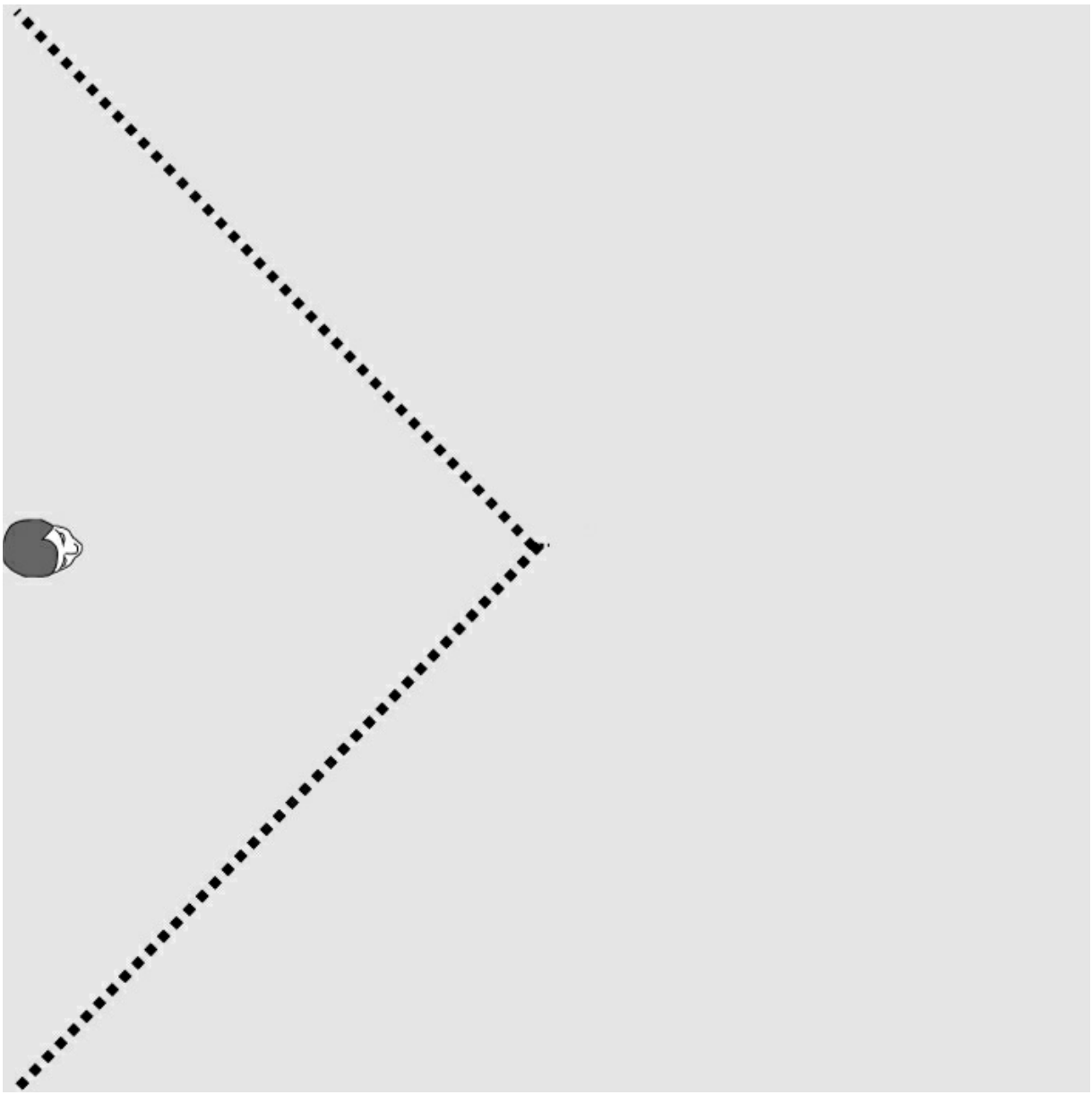
When you can visualize that clearly in front of you, extend the lines from 3 feet to 6 feet (2 meters). Again, the force increases. Hold that for ten seconds too. (Figure 3)

At this point, visualize that the lines are simultaneously pulled away from your temples until they cross at a 90 degree angle. They still cross 6 feet (2 meters) in front of your eyes. (Figure 4)

Now visualize the lines are pushed out even further, but at the same time, draw them back over your head. In other words, they're no longer in front of your eyes, but crowning the top of your head. If you don't get any reaction, keep pushing them out farther away from your head, while still maintaining a 90 degree angle. (Figure 5)

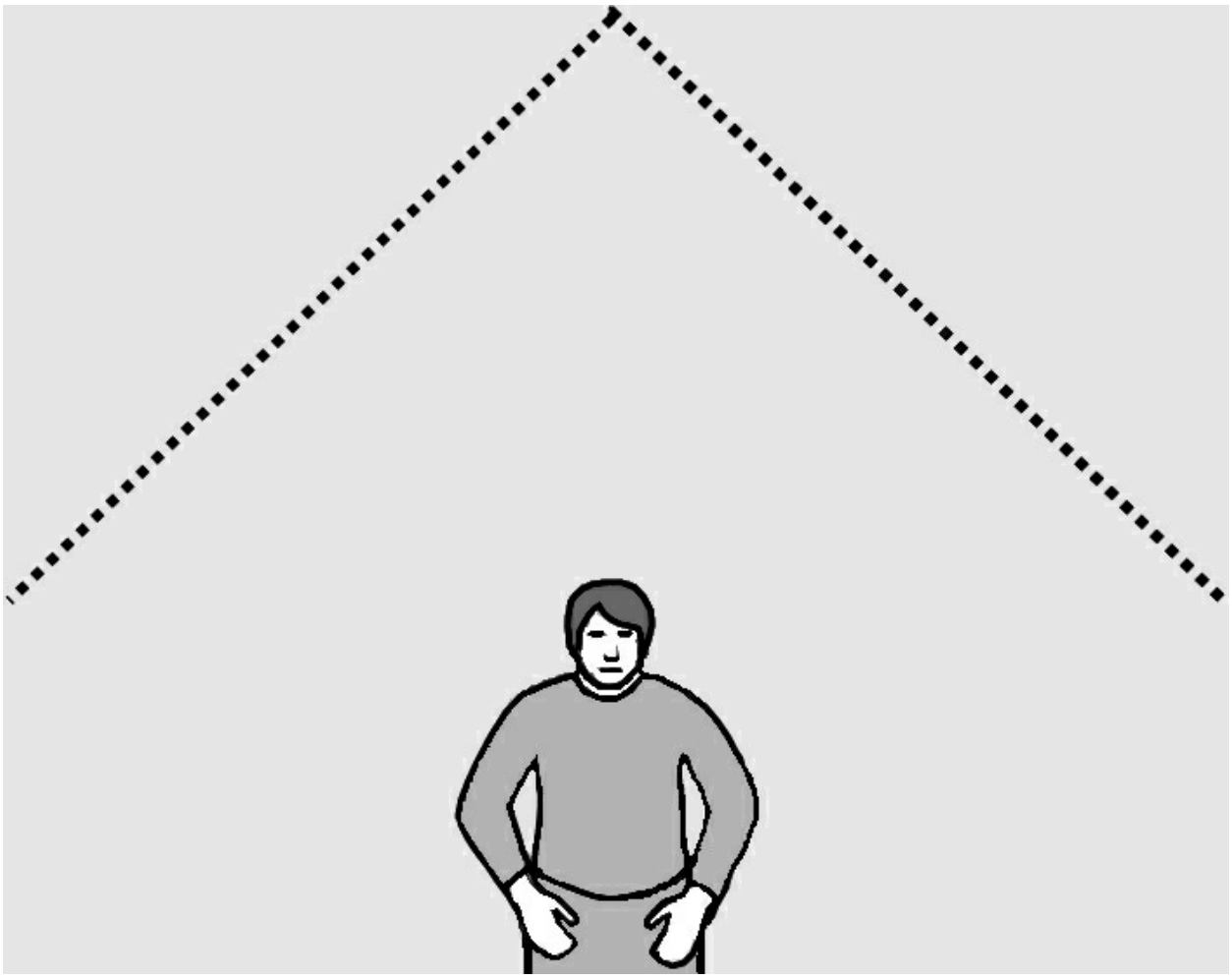
Figure 5 – Lines of force are above your head

When I got to this point, I had been at it a long time



and was just about to give up. Then I felt a heavy “twang” or “zap” in my head. It was an unusual sensation I’d never felt before. I suddenly became very alert, and it felt as if the lines of force had somehow become real and touched an electrical power line. To quote chapter 3 of my first book:

> “I thought, ‘Oops. Maybe this isn’t such a good idea.’ I tried to pull myself back to normal consciousness by retracting my imaginary lines of force. I quickly pulled the lines of



force back toward me, but much to my surprise, the ‘electricity’ I felt at the end of those lines was also being pulled toward me...A kind of electrical ‘vibration’ violently swept into my body, filling my body with an electric-like shock and a terrible roaring noise. I thought I was being electrocuted and my first reaction was sheer panic. I could hear my heart beating wildly in mad fear, but I was powerless to control it.

Somehow I could see through my closed eyelids. I looked up and I saw a blue ring of electrical fire flying right toward my head. It was about a foot in diameter, with the energy sparks about an inch-and-a-half thick, and it was bright blue. I instinctively tried to raise my arms to protect

> myself from the impact, but I found myself paralyzed and unable to move my arms. The ring of blue energy started to slip over my forehead and I looked away, afraid to see what would happen next. I started fighting wildly to regain control of my body and the 'vibrations' slowly smoothed down and died out. When the vibrations faded completely, I could move my body again."

In other words, I panicked. I chickened out and aborted the experience. I did the exact opposite of what I should have done. What should I have done when the vibrations hit? That's the subject of the next chapter.

[22] Journeys Out of the Body , Robert A. Monroe, Doubleday, 1977 edition, pg 212.

# Chapter 5. The Vibrations

Many OBE books, including mine, describe a concerning—if not downright scary—precursor to OBEs known as "the vibrations," as described in the last chapter. They range from rough, abrasive and electrical to smooth. Some authors even describe the vibrations as pleasurable or even ecstatic. Author Nanci Trivellato describes the vibrations as pleasant, soothing, even ecstatic, comparing them to orgasm. [23]

**What are the vibrations?**

Nobody knows exactly what "the vibrations" are. Many times they're a precursor or symptom of an oncoming OBE. People have speculated that they might be related to abnormal brain activity; that OBEs may actually be a very mild form of an epileptic seizure, [24] where feedback of electrical activity is bounced in a feedback loop between the hemispheres of the brain through the corpus callosum, the fiber that connects the brain's hemispheres.

Epileptic seizures are sometimes induced by flashing or strobe lights. The "PandoraStar" deep trance meditation machine uses similar programmed flashes of light to induce trance states through the closed eyelids. I've tried the PandoraStar and it didn't send me into any seizure or trance, nor did it invoke the vibrations, so I'm not convinced they're related. I only tried it once, though, so maybe I didn't give it enough of a chance. (My family has no history of seizures).

Another theory is that the vibrations are a milder form of a migraine headache. This idea is more intriguing since my family has a long history of bad, debilitating migraines. My mother and grandmother both had migraines. My sister and at least two of

my brothers get migraines, and sometimes they're so bad they vomit or even go to the hospital for treatment. Strangely, I've never had a migraine. In fact, I rarely get headaches at all (to the consternation of my siblings.)

That makes me wonder: Do I get OBEs instead of migraines? I never had OBEs until 1979, when I was 18, but for most people, migraines begin in childhood, adolescence or early adulthood. [25] Did I preempt migraines by developing OBE skills? I don't know if migraines can be induced, but I normally don't have OBEs unless I actually try to induce them. Migraines seem to occur naturally whereas OBEs do not, at least for me.

At any rate, the vibrations seem to lessen with time. That is to say, each year they seem to get progressively more smooth. Most of the time, I don't even notice them anymore. Sometimes on rare occasions I can still feel them, but it's a more mild, pleasant sensation.

Some occult-leaning people theorize that the vibrations are rough because the vibrations of your "spirit" or "soul" are so different from the vibrations of your physical body. They say that spiritual advancement raises your vibrations, so when you become more spiritual, you stop noticing the vibrations. I don't know if it's true; it sounds pretty unscientific to me.

**What to do when the vibrations hit**

When the vibrations hit, the most important thing you need to do is stay completely 100% calm and passive. Don't think. Don't feel. Don't act. Just sit there and watch.

Do **not** try to encourage the vibrations. Some authors insist you should focus on and encourage the vibrations, [26] but in my experience, that only makes them fade away. Just keep your mind as still, un-moving, and passive as possible. Wait patiently

and vow to just "watch what happens." I know that might seem almost impossible: it's like trying to ignore your own electrocution. In one of my books I wrote that it's like ignoring a slap in the face, but it is absolutely crucial. And yes, it can be scary as hell.

Let the vibrations reach their peak intensity. When they reach peak intensity, try to physically sit up, stand up, roll away, or otherwise get up out of the bed, couch or chair you're on.

If you have the "real OBE vibrations," your physical body will be paralyzed and unable to move. If your physical body moves, it wasn't the right vibrations and you probably weren't in a deep enough trance. Either that, or you waited too long or tried to influence the vibrations, which caused them to fade away.

If you experience the vibrations and your "non-physical body" will not move, is pinned, or stuck to the physical body, try again physically to move in a different direction. If you can't sit, try to roll left. If you can't roll left, try to roll right. If that doesn't work, try to raise your feet and do a backward somersault.

If you've tried everything and your non-physical body just can't seem to separate from the physical, congratulations, you've probably gotten yourself into a state called awareness during sleep paralysis (ASP), which is the topic of chapter 7. Before we get to that, you need some background on brain waves and sleep cycles.

[23] Vibrational State and Energy Resonance: Self-tuning to a higher level of consciousness, Nanci Trivellato, International Academy of Consciousness, 2017, pg. 103.

[24] "Out-of-body experiences associated with seizures," Greyson, Fountain, Derr, Broshek, Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 2014, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3923147/

[25] Mayo Clinic, https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/migraine-headache/symptoms-causes/syc-20360201

[26] Out of Body Experiences , Akhena, Channel Soleil Publications, 2013, pg. 79.

# Chapter 6. OBEs, Sleep Cycles, and Brain Waves 101

When people start to explore this subject, they sometimes wonder if OBEs are simply lucid dreams (dreams in which you're conscious and fully aware that you're dreaming.) I believe the answer is no. Lucid dreams occur during REM sleep (like normal dreams), whereas OBEs do not. [27] My belief is not only rooted in experience, but also the study of brain waves and sleep cycles.

In the early part of the twentieth century, scientists noticed that the skin of the scalp had measurable electrical activity that correlated with activity in the brain. German physiologist Hans Berger invented the electroencephalogram (EEG) and recorded the first human EEG in 1924. They were dubbed "brain waves" and they quickly became the standard for studying brain activity in the twentieth century. Brain waves are measurements of neural oscillation: large groups of neurons in the brain's neocortex (the exterior gray matter) firing together in repetitive sequences. These oscillations change depending on your state of mind. Scientists classify brain waves roughly into these types:

**Awake (7 – 100 Hz)**

Alpha: 7.5 - 12.5 Hz (contemplative, pre-sleep, light sleep, or quiet sleep – "hypnagogic")
Beta: 12.5 - 30 Hz (awake, more focused)
Gamma waves: 25 - 100 Hz

**Asleep**

Delta waves and slow-waves (0.5 – 2 Hz) (deep sleep)
Slow waves (2 – 4 Hz)

Theta (4 – 8 Hz) – Light dreamless sleep (we spend half our sleep time here)
Spindle waves (4 – 15 Hz)
REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep (15 – 30 Hz) (dreaming)

The problem with brain waves is that only the outside portions of the brain (the gray matter, or neocortex) are measured. An EEG can't tell you what's happening deeper inside the brain. Today we have more advanced forms of brain imaging, like fMRI (Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) and near infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) for that.

You probably noticed that I broke the brain waves above into two sections: awake and asleep. That's a gross oversimplification; it's not an on-off switch. There are degrees of consciousness, and you often experience a mixture of different frequencies in all states. Also note that there are overlaps in the frequencies and there's some conflicting information out there.

## Stages of Sleep

You don't just fall asleep at night and wake up in the morning; there are stages of sleep that repeat in a pattern. They call this pattern "circadian rhythms." Think of them as "sleep cycles."

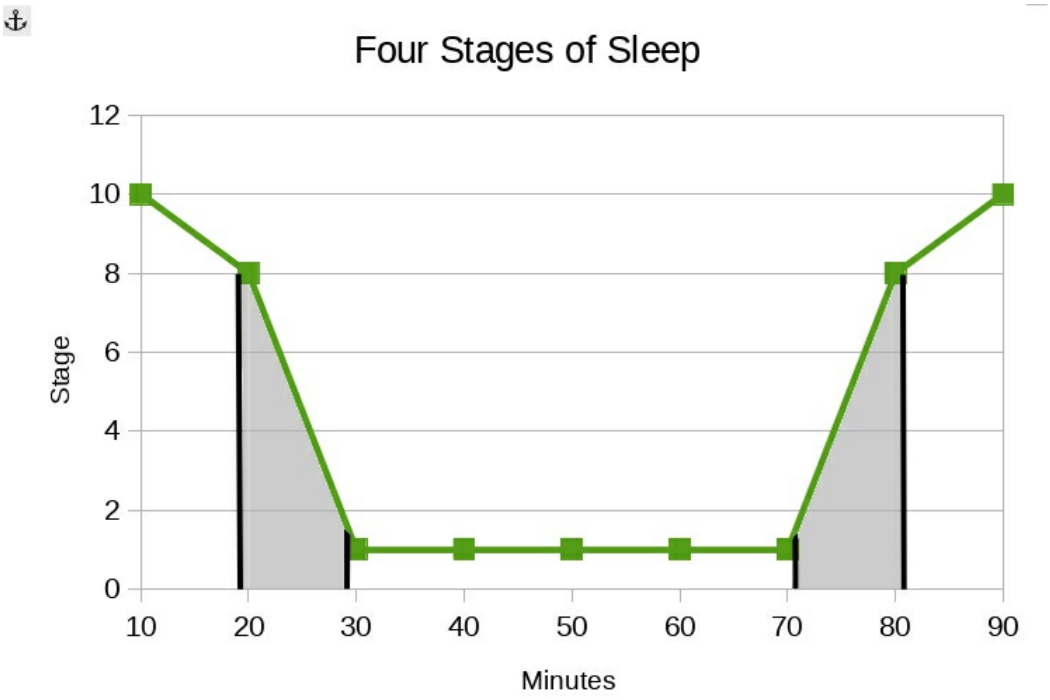
In a normal eight hour night of sleep, most people have five sleep cycles, each of which is about 90 minutes (the first one is often longer.) We start each cycle awake (or almost awake), go through phases, and end with REM sleep, which is when we dream. After a cycle ends, we wake up (or almost wake up), and the next cycle begins. [28]

The frequency and range of REM sleep brainwaves are

not unlike waking brainwaves. Many people think the brain "rests" during sleep. While that's true for parts of the sleep cycle, REM sleep is a firestorm of brain activity. It's also called "paradoxical sleep" because the brain's electrical activity is often higher and it consumes more oxygen than the waking state.

## An Easier Way To Think About Sleep Cycles

The frequency of brain waves isn't really important in this discussion. It's enough to think of sleep as typically five 90-minute cycles, each of which has of four parts: hypnagogic (going into sleep), non-REM (nREM) sleep, REM (dreaming), and hypnopompic (coming out of sleep).




Awake ☐

Hypnagogic ☐

REM (dream) ☐

nREM (wash) ☐

As you can see from this chart, we go from the hypnagogic state to a brief dreaming state (in gray). Then we descend to non-REM sleep where we spend the most time. From there we emerge to REM sleep (dreaming—also in gray), then back to the hypnopompic state, then the cycle restarts.

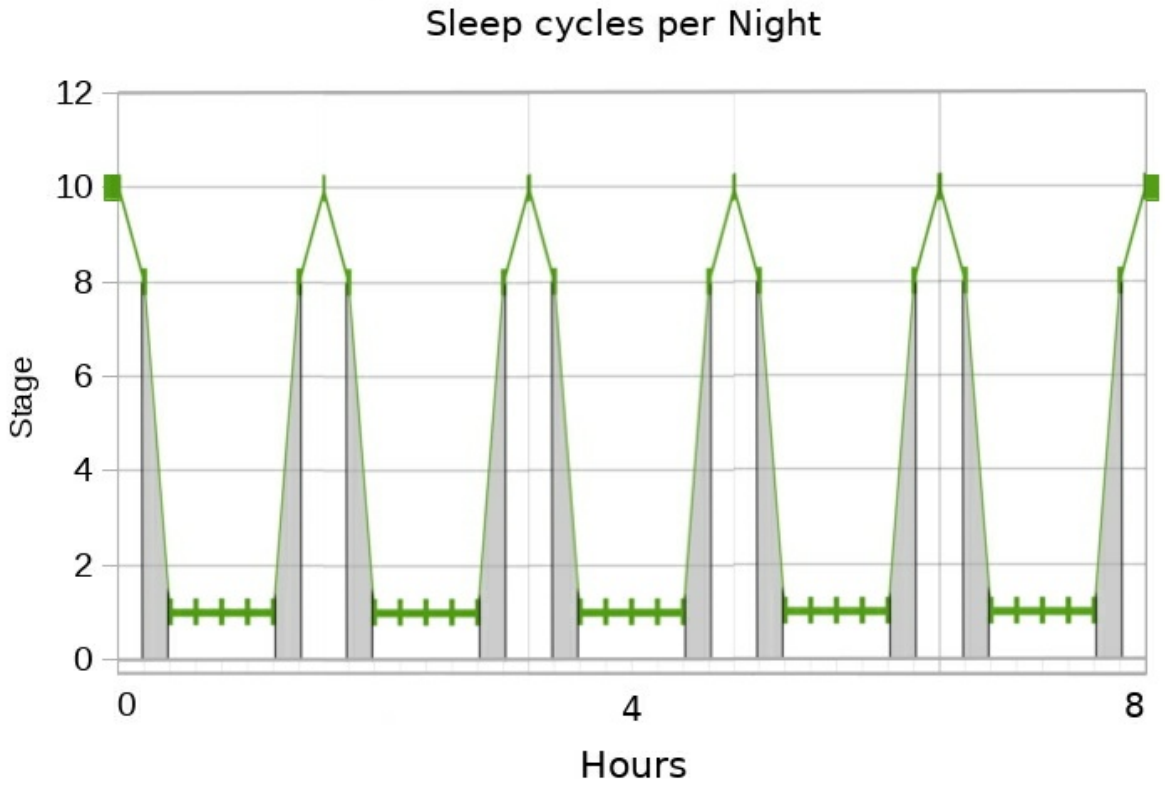
Notice that I labeled nREM sleep as "wash." Some research indicates that nREM sleep is like a "wash cycle" where our brains are cleaned. [29] It's like the stages of laundry: clothes get dirty as you use them, you take them off, then put them into a washing machine to launder them. Similarly, your brain gets dirty as you use it throughout the day. So you dissociate from the body (a type of OBE) to have it laundered by nREM sleep. As the brain gets cleaner with each sleep cycle, less nREM sleep is needed. As the nREM segments get shorter, the REM segments get longer. If you lay out a typical night's sleep into its constituent cycles, it might look something like this:

Dreams (and therefore lucid dreams) at the start of sleep are likely to be much shorter than dreams near the end of the sleep period.

For now, let's assume nREM sleep won't help us with our OBEs, although author Daniel Kelley might disagree. [30] To induce OBEs, I'll focus on the other three other stages of the sleep cycle: the hypnagogic (pre-sleep), the hypnopompic (post-sleep), and REM sleep (transitioning from a lucid dream to an OBE). I'll cover that in more detail in part 4.

Let's first turn our attention to the hypnopompic state and one of its many oddities: awareness during sleep paralysis.

[27] Dr. Charles Tart, a scientist who studied OBEs in the lab noted in one OBE case that t he occipital channel of the EEG showed an enlarged, slow wave artifact, and the EEG looked like stage 1 (hypnagogic) tracing, with an irregular mixture of theta waves, random low-voltage activity and




occasional isolated alphoid activity (brain waves of 1 to 2 cycles per second slower than waking alpha) and occasional normal alpha. There were no Rapid Eye Movements (REMs) at the time. Not enough study has been done, so more data is needed.

[28] Sometimes we wake up completely between cycles. Other times we don't quite breach the surface. Waking up between cycles is natural, yet some people complain that they "didn't get good sleep" because they "keep waking up." You can wake up five times a night, without a problem. It's only a problem if you can't get back to sleep to start the next cycle.

[29] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, How Sleep Clears the Brain , https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/how-sleep-clears-brain

[30] Behind the Veil , Daniel Kelley, 2018. Kelley devotes a considerable amount of his book to the concept that you can retain consciousness during all stages of sleep, including nREM, but I don't know of any other

examples in the OBE literature.

# Chapter 7. Sleep Paralysis and OBEs

For years, I got emails almost daily from people who, whether they knew it or not, had experienced awareness during sleep paralysis (ASP). Most of them were distraught, afraid to fall asleep, and desperate for help. None of them knew they could harness the state to induce an out-of-body experience.

**What is sleep paralysis (SP)?**

Sleep Paralysis (SP) is a normal, natural bodily function that causes your physical body to be paralyzed during sleep. Its purpose is to prevent you from hurting yourself when you dream. It is supposed to happen every time you fall sleep and it usually sets in long before you start dreaming. When it doesn't work properly, you can have serious problems like sleepwalking where people can get seriously hurt.

I once read an article about a soldier who had severe Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after he returned home from a war zone. He started sleepwalking and was so dangerous that his wife had to lock up all the guns in the house.

Normally, we are not conscious when SP sets in, so most people don't even know it exists. However, once in a while, someone becomes conscious and aware during that period, and that's when it becomes ASP, Awareness during Sleep Paralysis. ASP happens more often upon waking up: your mind wakes up before your body does. Eventually, your body catches up to your mind and wakes up too. But it can also happen during OBE induction techniques, as we saw in the previous chapter.

**Symptoms of ASP**

When someone becomes conscious and aware of their SP condition, they usually don't know what's happening.

Naturally, since they're conscious, they try to move, but can't. When they find out they're paralyzed, they become agitated, distressed, afraid, and may even panic. They're stuck between physical reality and a hallucinated world of dreams and can't seem to get to either place. Often, they struggle and thrash against the paralysis, trying to get free, but that rarely helps. They're trapped between the real world and the hallucinated world of dreams.

To make matters worse, fears (both conscious and subconscious) can easily become manifest as very realistic hallucinations in the ASP state. So people often see spirits, monsters, demons, witches, or other unsavory creatures (what author Robert Bruce calls "astral wildlife") attacking them. It's also quite common for people to see an old hag trying to sit on them. It's so common that they coined the word "hagging" to describe it. It's also common to see a dark and sinister "shadow man" or "hat man," whose face is hidden. ASP suffers often wake up "just in the nick of time before the monsters get them," when in reality the fear-induced shot of adrenaline is what breaks them out of the paralysis. For the most part these creatures are hallucinations, so they can be safely disregarded, but I realize that's easier said than done.

**False Awakening**

Most of the time, ASP sufferers struggle to regain control of their body and eventually win. Sometimes a person may seem to wake up, only to discover at some point that they're really still asleep and only dreamed that they woke up. They call this phenomenon "false awaken-ing." I've had people complain bitterly that they were forced to shower, put on deodorant, shave, brush their teeth, get dressed, and get ready for work multiple times because they were only dreaming it the first few times. Sometimes a person can have several false awakenings in a row, leading them

to become frustrated that they can't wake up, or worse, terrified they may never wake up again.

It's very common for ASP sufferers to be so distraught and afraid that they dread sleep. They wake up exhausted and desperate for relief. It feels like they're constantly tormented by spirits or demons. They're often reluctant to discuss their experiences because they're afraid people will think they've gone mad. Many people have kept this their dirty little secret their whole life.

**How common is ASP?**

Actually, ASP is quite common and nothing to be afraid of. Based on the number of emails I've received, it happens to many thousands or maybe even millions of people every day.

**What can you do about the monsters?**

When people learn about ASP and how it works, they become less fearful. With less fear, they tend to see fewer monsters. So the best advice is to remain calm, don't panic, and realize that you're safe. This is a natural thing your physical body does.

**How can you break out of the ASP state?**

Sometimes extreme emotions like panic or anger will cause a change in brain chemistry, and that may break you out of the ASP state. Usually, however, you just have to wait for it to wear off. Many sleep researchers think ASP has to do with brain hormones, so you'll automatically break out of it when your hormones stabilize. Until then, all you can do is wait for it to end. Or, as I hinted, use it as a springboard for OBEs.

**How does ASP relate to OBE?**

In my experience, in the ASP state you are already in

an OBE, but stuck to the physical body and unable to go anywhere or do anything: it's very frustrating. Struggling against the paralysis is often futile, and if you do win, you'll go back into your body, which is also frustrating.

**Can you turn ASP into an OBE?**

Yes. Believe it or not, it took me twenty years of trying before I learned the secret of how to turn ASP into OBE. Before I learned the secret, it was easier for me to induce an OBE from full waking consciousness than it was from the ASP state. The secret lies primarily in knowing what's really going on, and to understand that, we need to talk about "non-physical bodies."

**The theory of non-physical bodies**

Throughout history, people have believed we have multiple vehicles of consciousness. The ancient Egyptians wrote about the Ka and the Ba, the soul that was weighed against a feather on judgment day. The Tibetan Buddhists wrote about a non-physical body called the Bardo body.

Even in modern times, many OBE authors, especially those who come from various esoteric and occult traditions, believe that we have multiple vehicles of consciousness: a physical body for our physical experiences, an astral body for astral projection, a mental body for mental projection, and so forth. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Theosophists like Charles Leadbeater and A.E. Powell, carried this to an extreme, describing seven planes of existence that are further divided into sub-planes.[31] I'm sure all this lore is based on the OBEs of real people, so I have no doubt that experiences of different qualities led to these distinctions, but is any of it true?

One of the non-physical bodies many OBE authors talk about is the etheric double, etheric body, energy body, or what IAC

(International Academy of Consciousness) calls the "energosoma." They say that if we are in our bedroom, and see what looks like the physical world in an OBE, we're actually on the etheric plane using the etheric body as a vehicle for consciousness. I've always favored the term "energy body" because it doesn't have all the occult connotations of "etheric."

Dr. Robert Crookall, a geologist who loved to study OBEs in the mid twentieth century, collected more than a thousand OBE narratives and analyzed what people had reported. He wrote several books based on his analysis. [32] Crookall believed we have a semi-physical "vehicle of vitality" that is permanently glued to the physical body. He claimed there's only one way the vehicle of vitality would separate from the physical body, and that is if you died. However, he also claimed that spirit mediums (i.e. physical mediumship, as taught by the religions of Spiritualism and Spiritism) had the unique ability to separate their vehicle of vitality from their physical body. He also wrote about OBEs as if the astral body was used as a vehicle of consciousness to visit earthly (physical) locations as well as astral locations, thus eliminating the need for another non-physical body. So maybe the "etheric body" or "energy body" is Crookall's "vehicle of vitality."

If Crookall was right and the energy body is permanently stuck to the physical, and can be used as a vehicle for consciousness, it would explain why people get stuck to their body in the ASP state. In other words, maybe during ASP, we're stuck inside the energy body and therefore unable to move. This matches what I've experienced many times firsthand. In the ASP state, your non-physical body seems tightly glued to the physical body, and prying on it and trying to dislodge it is futile.

Maybe Crookall was partly right. Maybe the energy body is not permanently glued to the physical, but just very

stubborn, like Velcro, but may still be dislodged. Or maybe, as skeptics insist, there's no such thing as a non-physical body. More on that later.

**The Secret to Turn ASP into OBE**

The trick to turn ASP into OBE works whether or not you believe the "energy body" and "astral body" are actual things or just variations of an altered "body schema" inside the brain. In my experience, the trick is to try to transfer your consciousness from your energy body to your astral body:

Close your eyes and keep them closed. The reason is: Your eyes aren't paralyzed like the rest of your body during sleep paralysis, as proven by rapid eye movements. When you're very close to your physical body, your eyesight can contradict your non-physical experience, and therefore can be very confusing; confusing enough to send you back to full body awareness.

Next, try to push forward with your consciousness and imagine that your consciousness is moving forward. Even though you may not feel any movement, your consciousness will move.

If you doubt that it's working and open your eyes prematurely, your awareness will zip like a ball on a rubber band back to your energy body and you're back to square one.

Keep your eyes closed and have faith that your consciousness is moving forward.

Keep pushing forward with your consciousness as hard as you can, just like walking underwater, until you are about fifteen feet (five meters) away from your body. Of course, since your eyes are closed, you can only approximate how far this is. So don't obsess on the distance, just take a best guess. Once you are safely fifteen feet away from your body, you may open your (non-physical) eyes, and you will be free to roam in an OBE.

The 15 feet figure comes from Sylvan Muldoon , one of the earliest and most influential pioneers of "astral projection" as it was then called. He believed that the astral body is attached to the physical body by a "silver cord" which can prematurely pull you back to full body-awareness if you're too close to it. Once outside that range, you are free to roam anywhere you want. He called that distance the "cord activity range," [33] and estimated it to be about fifteen feet. My experience matches this as well. Some claim Muldoon's OBEs were not astral projections, but etheric projections, [34] but if Crookall's theory was right, they were just normal "astral projections" (if there is such a thing.)

**A more scientific interpretation**

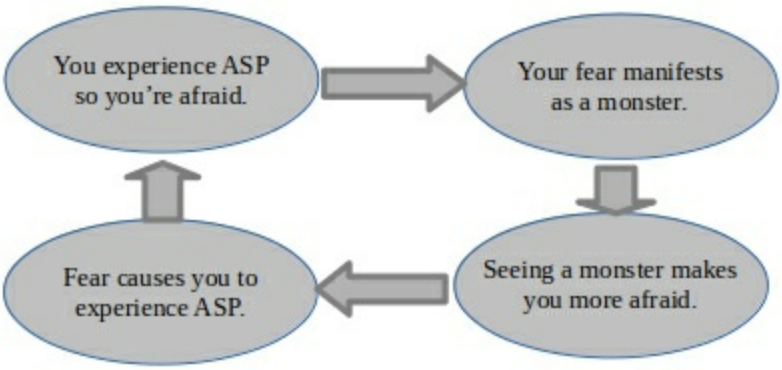
Author Frederick Aardema calls into question whether or not we actually have non-physical bodies like an astral body or energy body. His book has a great discussion about how our body image (more correctly, body schema) is psychologically hardwired and tied into our psyche. [35] We can't have an "experience" without a vehicle of consciousness to act. I agree with Fred's discussion and it also matches my experience. I prefer to think that we're all technically disembodied points of conscious awareness, but we have a "body schema" built into our psyche. This is that same "story of experience" manufactured by the TPJ I talked about in chapter 3. This is evident in the fact that we have an artificial body schema even when we're in a dream, which is an entirely self-created hallucinated environment.

**The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy ASP Cycle**

There's a lot of evidence to suggest ASP is related to, or at least triggered by, stress and sometimes fear. This can lead to a never-ending cycle of ASP, which goes something like this:

An experience of ASP causes you to be afraid, so your

fear manifests as a monster. Seeing the monster makes you more afraid, which, in turn, triggers more ASP. I've talked to countless desperate people who tell me they're deathly afraid it's going to happen to them again. And like any good self-fulfilling prophecy, it does, and it's all because the fear drives the experience.


You experience ASP so you're afraid.
Your fear manifests as a monster.
Seeing a monster makes you more afraid.
Fear causes you to experience ASP.

So either you can face and conquer your fears, which lessens the ASP, or you can harness your fear purposely to induce ASP, then turn it into an OBE. That brings us to our next topic: overcoming fear.

[31] C.W. Leadbeater, The Astral Plane , The Theosophical Publishing House, 1895. C.W. Leadbeater, The Inner Life, 1910. A.E. Powell, The Astral Bod (and other astral phenomena, 1927. A.E.Powell, The Etheric Double, etc.

[32] The Study and Practice of Astral Projection, Robert Crookall, Aquarian Press, 1960, The Techniques of Astral Projection, London: Aquarian Press, 1964, Case-Book of Astral Projection 545-746 , Citadel Press, 1980, etc.

[33] Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington, The Projection of the Astral Body, Weiser, 1929.

[34] Astral Doorways, J.H. Brennan, Weiser, 1971, pg. 2.

[35] Explorations In Consciousness , Frederick Aardema, Mount Royal Publishing, 2012, pg. 63-64.

# Chapter 8. Overcoming Fear

I wanted to focus solely on OBE techniques in this book, but I'd be doing you an disservice if I didn't talk about fear, because fear can stop you from having OBEs like it stopped me in my first encounter with the vibrations. In fact, some authors say fear is the biggest obstacle to OBEs. [36]

It's a fact of life: If you're going to induce OBEs, you're going to experience fear. It's not because OBEs are scary. In fact, most of the time they're really fun and exciting. It's because in an OBE, you directly confront two of mankind's biggest fears; fears that are hardwired into our brains: fear of death and fear of the unknown.

Think of it this way: A hundred thousand years ago, primitive cave dwellers stood outside the mouths of caves and wondered: Should I go in? Many cavemen who were fearless entered the cave and were promptly mauled by bears or eaten by saber-tooth tigers; their genes were taken out of the gene pool. The people who approached the cave with a fear of the unknown and fear of death, evaded the dangers and went on to propagate the species. They passed that fear-gene on to their descendants, and eventually, to you. In other words, fear is a necessary survival tactic for the human species [37], but it's a function of the physical body, so you don't need it during an OBE.

**Can you die from an OBE?**

Not as far as I know. Obviously, if someone has died in an OBE, they haven't been around to warn us of the danger. On the other hand, I've been doing OBEs for many years now, and had no problems as a result. If something "out there" could kill me, I should have died a long time ago. The bottom line is: if

OBEs are all inside your head, you don't need to fear anything; nothing can harm you any more than a dream figure. But if there is a non-physical component, for example, an astral body visiting a non-physical world, nothing can harm you, physically.

**Will I die if something cuts my silver cord? Will it break if I go too far?**

Since ancient times, people have reported a silver cord that connects the non-physical body to the physical body. As far as I know, the earliest mention of it is in the Bible (Ecclesiastes 12:6). They say that if you cut the silver cord, you'll die. But is that true?

The silver cord's very existence is still the subject of heated debate. Many people look for it and don't see it. Others insist it's always there whether you see it or not. I've seen, felt, and fought the silver cord on many occasions. In my first book I wrote about OBEs in which I struggled and fought against it, even going so far as to yank on it with all my might. [38] Needless to say, no harm ever came to me from these antics. I think it's more of a psychological device rather than a real thing.

Early OBE authors like Oliver Fox and Sylvan Muldoon said the silver cord can stretch an infinite (or near infinite) distance, so you can't go too far. [39] To me that sounds just too unscientific. Still, when it seems like you're out in the blackness of space, light-years away from the nearest star (which I have been), you either have to believe it can stretch to near-infinity or else it's just a figment of our imagination. Or maybe part of our psychology or belief system, with no real basis in fact.

**Can I get lost in an OBE and not be able to find my way back?**

I've had many OBEs in which I found myself in a strange place with no idea where I was, but I've always come back to my body whether I wanted to or not. So you can get lost, but

you'll always find your way back to your body.

From personal experience, I know that there's much more to us than we realize. What comprises "you" is actually a collection of different layers of awareness. Or as Robert Waggoner so aptly wrote, "Basically, it seems to me that we clothe awareness with layers of self concep-tions. Then we assume awareness results from or exists by virtue of the clothing of self-conceptions!" [40]

Psychology already recognizes different layers of consciousness, such as the conscious and the subconscious. Although it may not be part of accepted science, I believe we also have a very powerful "higher self" who has invested a lot of painstaking time and effort to build and maintain your physical body for a purpose, and it isn't going to let you just wander off aimlessly.

**Can I be possessed during an OBE?**

Some people are afraid of demonic possession: your body being taken over and controlled by a spirit or demon while you're away. I don't think that can happen. I once had a friend named Lisa (LD in my first book) who had OBEs. One time she returned to her bedroom to find the spirit of a woman trying to enter and animate her body. It was unsuccessful. When she saw the spirit, Lisa was so angry that she yelled at the spirit to get out "or else." The spirit said no, but Lisa became furious and yelled "Now!" The spirit was so frightened it fled, and Lisa entered her body again.

Again, your "higher self" has invested too much time and energy in your physical body to let it go that easily. It won't let another entity control it. Your body can only be animated by you.

**How can I conquer fear?**

The problem with fear is that it's an emotional response, so reasoning with it only goes so far. You can go into the pre-OBE state with a firm resolution to be brave and face the fear, but at some point, your body's instinct for survival will kick in and you'll be afraid again.

In many cases, fear can only be conquered with time and experience: The first few times you have an OBE, you'll have fear of the unknown. After a few times, it will be a bit less scary as the unknown becomes known. You grow more comfortable with the strangeness. After your hundredth OBE, you may come to realize there's nothing to be afraid of. Take comfort in the fact that "bravery" is not being fearless. Bravery means you feel the fear, but you don't let that fear stop you. It helps to tell yourself, "I'll let it go on a little longer and just see what happens." It also helps to realize that fear is a physical body instinct for self-preservation, and you don't need it in an OBE.

It's always best to confront fears directly. I used to be afraid of bears. I had nightmares about bears chasing me through the woods. They stopped once I confronted my fear head-on. How? I once hand-fed an un-caged 10-month old grizzly bear with absolutely no protection. That's a long story, the details of which are beyond the scope of this book. My point is: face your fears.

If you get scared and abort the OBE, that's okay. It happens to the best of us, and sometimes that's the best course of action. Don't be too hard on yourself. Just vow to do better next time, and don't let it stop you from making further attempts. Or take it a step further and do what Alison Wylie did: sought out fearful encounters so she could face and overcome her fears. [41]

**What's the scariest thing you've seen in an OBE?**

In one OBE I found myself in a black void, surrounded by a mob of people who looked very hostile. I

considered trying to outrun—or out-fly—them, but decided it was safer to just abort the OBE and return to my body. [42] In another scary OBE, I saw a man with an annoying grin who followed me around and poked me several times in the shoulder with a painful shock. This was what I imagine a cattle-prod feels like. I was annoyed, but not scared. I yelled at him and tried to get away, but he kept following me. In the end I just aborted the OBE. In a third OBE, I encountered a small twisted-looking black-skinned creature that followed me around, grabbing at my legs. Several times he spewed extremely crude, graphic pornographic telepathy at me. As before, I was not scared, just annoyed. I yelled at him, "Get away from me, you disgusting filth!" and that seemed to put him in his place.

I've also had some really scary faces jump at me suddenly while attempting to induce an OBE, but I don't really count that; I chalk that up to the Guardian of the threshold (see next chapter).

I don't want to give you the wrong impression. The vast majority of my OBEs have been positive, uplifting and joyful. In 40 years of OBEs, I've really only had a handful of negative experiences; a really low percentage.

## OBE Safety Precautions

In most cases, your best defense is to not be afraid. I know that's not easy, but consider this: I'm sure 99% of all "negative" OBEs are manifested subconscious fears, and therefore not real (scientists would say 100%). So you can safely ignore them. The remaining 1%, if real, feed off your fear, which gives them control. If you are unafraid, they can't harm you. They can startle you, but not harm you. In my experience, most negative entities will turn and run if you confront or threaten them (this is

also true for physical attackers). The reason is that you're more powerful than they are. Since you're incarnate, you control semi-physical energy (also known as chi, Qi or prana; more about that later), plus an emotional center that makes you scary and unpredictable to them. Although some non-physical entities may find it fun to torment OBErs, you can inflict a lot of pain on them, and they're well aware of that. When Erin Pavlina discovered this advantage and the trick of being fearless, she and her friends decided to retaliate by going on several astral hunting expeditions, searching for and punishing negative entities. [43]

**How can I protect myself from a negative encounter?**

Pavlina and her friends used their imaginations to create shields, swords, and other weapons. The weapons were only imaginary, but it was enough to give them an advantage in a fight.

I prefer a more positive approach. If you find yourself in an OBE in which you feel unsafe, simply return to your physical body by thinking about it. If you don't want to waste the OBE opportunity, a positive attitude is really all you need to stay safe. Use your imagination to surround yourself with a protective white light. You can also "raise your vibrations" by thinking positive and loving thoughts, and you'll often be transported to another, more positive, location.

It may also help to do affirmations before you attempt an OBE, or even during the OBE itself. Affirm "I am safe. My body is safe." If you have religious inclinations, it may help to say a prayer of protection. If you're Wiccan, cast a spell of protection. If you're an occultist, perform a ritual of protection. You get the idea.

If none of that works, my rule of thumb is: **it's better to be angry than afraid.** Don't cower in fear, because fear gives

up your power. It's much better to get really pissed off and start yelling, screaming and swearing at negative entities, like my friend Lisa did. Threaten to cause them more pain than they've ever felt before.

The bottom line is that when you start self-inducing OBEs, you are likely to encounter some scary situations. The precautions I recommended above will help you to overcome them. The good news is that almost all of the scary encounters come from your own subconscious, which is the topic of the next chapter, "The Guardian of the threshold."

[36] Behind the Veil , Daniel Kelley, 2018. Journeys Out of the Body , Robert A. Monroe, Doubleday, 1977, pg. 205.

[37] Some species, like most animals on the Galapagos Islands, have no instinctual fear. Due to a lack of natural predators, after thousands of years of evolution, the fear-gene has been completely bred out of them.

[38] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, chapter 13.

[39] Astral Projection , Oliver Fox, Citadel Press, 1979, pg. 29 and The Projection of the Astral Body , Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington, Samuel Weiser, 1929, pg. 16.

[40] Lucid Dreaming , Robert Waggoner, Moment Point Press, 2009, pg. 85.

[41] Astral Dancer , Alison Wylie, Trafford Publishing, 2008, Chapter 8, "The Darkness," pg 99 – 125.

[42] Lessons Out of the Body , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2001, Chapter 5, "Astral Lynch Mobs"

[43] The Astral Projection Guidebook , Erin Pavlina, self-published, 2013, Chapter 13, pg 121.

# Chapter 9. The Guardian of the threshold

In chapter 7, I said that our fears (both conscious and subconscious) are manifested in the ASP state. It actually goes much deeper; it goes all the way to the deepest parts of our psyche. We all have a psychological defense mechanism known as the "guardian" or "dweller" of the threshold. It's another annoyance that can keep you from having OBEs, so you need to know about it and how to deal with it. Very few OBE books talk about it [44] , so what I'm about to tell you is based on my direct experience.

To explain the Guardian of the threshold, I'll start with some examples. It's Sunday morning and you're lying in bed, trying hard to produce an OBE. You're in the perfect state, relaxed, focused and single-minded. You're just a hairbreadth away from an OBE when all of a sudden you hear a familiar voice, convincingly real in every respect. It's your mom, dad, spouse, or other voice of authority saying something like "Come on. Get up! Get out of bed. We've got to go! Right now!" You may even hear banging or knocking on your bedroom door. The sense of urgency is palpable, but what horrible timing. You were almost there, right?

Sometimes the voice may sound angry. "You lazy good-for-nothing. You've been lying around in bed all morning! I've been waiting an hour for you to get up. Get out of bed." It may appeal to your sense of urgency. "It's your little sister! Something's caught in her throat and she's choking! Hurry!" Or maybe, "Your boss is on the phone and she's pissed. You better get up and take this." You wonder, "Why is she calling me on a Sunday morning?" Or maybe you hear bangs on the door and a booming voice, "This is the police. We've got a warrant..." Or my personal favorite, "The house is on fire! It's a matter of life and death! You've got to get up!"

With a deep sigh and deeper regret, you abort the OBE and get out of bed to see what's so damn urgent, only to discover there's nobody there. Nobody is at the door, nobody's choking, nobody's on the phone, and there are no cops. There is no emergency. You were pranked.

**The Shadow Man or Hat Man**

It can be much more menacing than just a voice. More sinister versions probably stem from episodes of ASP (Awareness during Sleep Paralysis) in which your subconscious fears and insecurities manifest as very realistic hallucinations, like:

An old hag who wants to sit on you.
A sexual demon (incubus or succubus) who tries to rape you in your paralyzed and helpless state.
A dark menacing shadow figure whose face is not quite visible.
A man whose face is hidden beneath a black hat.
A demon (for Christians) or a Jinn (for Muslims.)

These are all basically the same thing. This is the "Dweller" or "Guardian" of the threshold. If you've practiced OBEs any length of time, you've probably encountered it in one of its many forms. According to Wikipedia :

> "The **Guardian of the Threshold** is a menacing figure that is described by a number of esoteric teachers. The term "Guardian of the Threshold", often called "dweller on the threshold", indicates a spectral image which is supposed to manifest itself as soon as "the student of the spirit ascends upon the path into the higher worlds of knowledge". [45]

**What is the Guardian of the Threshold?**

In my opinion, the Guardian is a collection of subconscious scare tactics; a defense mechanism and nothing more. It comes from your own subconscious fears and insecurities.

**What does it want? What is its purpose?**

I believe its purpose is to make sure you **don't** achieve out-of-body experiences until you're psychologic-ally prepared for it. It wants to make sure you're cool headed to remain calm and in control when faced with unexpected or frightening circumstances.

## Variations (alternate scare tactics)

**Your heart starts beating out of control**

Another common variation is when it seems like your heart starts beating wildly out of control, like it's going to explode in your chest. This one's a little more tricky. On the one hand, it could really be your heart: it's easy to believe an adrenaline rush may have pushed your heart into atrial fibrillation ("a-fib") or some other fight-or-flight response. I'm especially vulnerable to this because my heart does occasionally go into a-fib (not in OBEs, but under normal circumstances). However, on many occasions, I've forced myself back to full consciousness only to find it was a false alarm: my heart was, in fact, beating normally or even slower than normal.

**You seem to stop breathing**

Another variation is when it seems like your physical body stops breathing. One minute it seems like your body is breathing normally: you can hear the breath coming and going from your lungs, then suddenly everything goes silent. It seems like you stop breathing. So you get scared that you're going to suffocate. But when you abort the OBE, you discover your body is

still breathing normally. This can either be a manifestation of the Guardian, or simply because you lost awareness of your physical body as your conscious awareness shifts focus to the non-physical environment.

Yvette LeBlanc takes it a step further. She purposely slows down her breath, then does an exit technique before she takes the next breath, trusting that her body's autonomic nervous system will keep breathing normally. [46]

**How do you stop the guardian?**

Bear in mind that the voices and distractions are not real. If there is a real emergency, you won't have to pause and think about aborting: you would already have been jarred out of the pre-OBE state automatically. In other words, if a real emergency happens, there won't be a reason to hear the voice in the first place.

The key to stopping all this nonsense is to understand exactly what it is and why. The guardian (your own subconscious) is testing you. To get rid of it, you simply need to pass the test. You need to just remain calm, ignore the distraction, and continue to the out-of-body state. Think, "Nice try, but I'm not going to fall for it this time. I'm not going to let it stop me." Once you learn to ignore the Guardian and continue with the OBE, you will have "passed the test" and leveled up. Your subconscious will realize you refuse to be manipulated, so it will no longer bother with the scare tactics. Then you can fearlessly start to explore this strange new state of consciousness. It turns out there are actually four OBE states, but that's the subject of the next chapter.

[44] Yvette LeBlanc's book Astral Travel and Aura Viewing is one exception.

[45] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guardian_of_the_Threshold

[46] Astral Travel and Aura Viewing , Yvette LeBlanc, self-published, 2011, pg 30.

# Chapter 10. The Four OBE States

My personal observations led me to develop a theory I call "the four OBE states." Knowing what they are can help you understand how to approach them and how to transition from one to another, so you can have fully conscious OBEs.

**Conscious versus unconscious**

It may seem intuitively obvious, but the first thing you need to understand is that you can be either "conscious" (lucid) or "unconscious." When you're conscious, the "ego" part of you is aware and records your experiences as memories. When you're unconscious, that switch is flipped off. Other parts still operate—the autonomic nervous system and such—but they work unconsciously to maintain breathing, heartbeat, and general monitoring of your surroundings for danger.

In a way, consciousness is like pressing the "record" button on a camcorder or cellphone: the light comes on and you start recording what happens into your waking memories.

In terms of neuroscience, some evidence suggests that the "consciousness" or "lucidity" switch may be associated with activity in the brain's medial pre-frontal cortex (mPFC), which is part of the default mode network (DMN). I'll explain all that in chapter 72.

When I talked about awareness during sleep paralysis (ASP) in chapter 7, I said there's a difference between being conscious and your body being awake. Normally, the two things coincide, but ASP occurs when you become conscious before your body is awake.

The second thing to know is that in an OBE (as I define it) your body is asleep (or very close to it) but your mind is

awake and lucid. But it's more than just that: on countless occasions, I've put my body to sleep, and can hear it loudly snoring, but as soon as I try to move, my body moves and I wake up completely, spoiling any chance for an OBE. Not only does your body need to be asleep, and your mind awake, you also need to have a dissociated body schema. The missing ingredient is what I called an altered "story of experience" in chapter 3.

In chapter 6 I talked about how the "astral body" and other non-physical bodies are probably not real, but rather, variations of a "body schema" that comes hardwired into our identity. But our identity is not a static thing. It's just part of our "story of experience." In Act II, Scene VII of the play As You Like It , William Shakespeare famously wrote:

> "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances, And one man in his time plays many parts..."

His description was more accurate than people realize. In order to construct a play, you need both actors and a story. I believe it's literally the same with our daily lives. Y ou are constantly building a virtual world that you interpret as "experience," whether in-the-body or out-of-body. This virtual world is your interpretation of what is happening to you. It's your story of experience.

As I said in chapter 3, I believe our "story of experience" is created by the brain's temporoparietal junction (TPJ.) That may or may not be true [47], but for the sake of argument, let's pretend for now that it is. The TPJ's "story of experience" is based on the data it receives. While awake, it receives data from the physical senses: sight, sound, hearing, taste, and touch. While asleep, all that data is shut off, so the brain

creates an elaborate hallucination called a dream. A dream is nothing more than a self-created hallucination: a manufactured story of experience. By self-created, I mean it's a product of deeper parts of the psyche, including the subconscious.

I like to think there is other data available to the brain as well. Some of Dean Radin's books, such as Entangled Minds, have convincing evidence to suggest telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition are real, plus speculations that they're based on data received from quantum fields. My theory is that during an OBE, the brain creates a story of experience from these same quantum fields. Perhaps the only difference between experiences of the physical, astral, etheric, or any other "plane" is just different data from different quantum fields. Some might even argue that our physical body is also a story of experience based on its own quantum field.

**We have OBEs every night**

Based on personal observations, I believe we have OBEs every night, but we're not aware of it because we are unconscious when it happens. I've "woken up" many times in the middle of the night to find myself in an OBE, floating just above my physical body. I'm not the only one to experience this. Veteran OBEr Sylvan Muldoon, said the same thing. He thought we leave our body during sleep in order to charge the physical body. He believed the astral body acts as an energy collection system to charge the etheric body, which in turn charges the physical body. [48]

Scientists now know that a big part of sleep (at least non-REM, or nREM sleep) is spent rebalancing brain chemicals and cleaning the brain of impurities. In other words, we basically use that time to clean or "launder" the brain, for lack of better words, as I explained in chapter 6.

Perhaps we dissociate from the body during sleep for the same reason we need to take our clothes off in order to launder them. Or why you don't eat Oreo cookies while brushing your teeth. That led me to form my theory of the four OBE states:

## The Four OBE States

My theory is that during an OBE you can be in one of four basic states, and it depends on whether or not you're conscious, and whether or not you're hallucinating. See Figure 1.

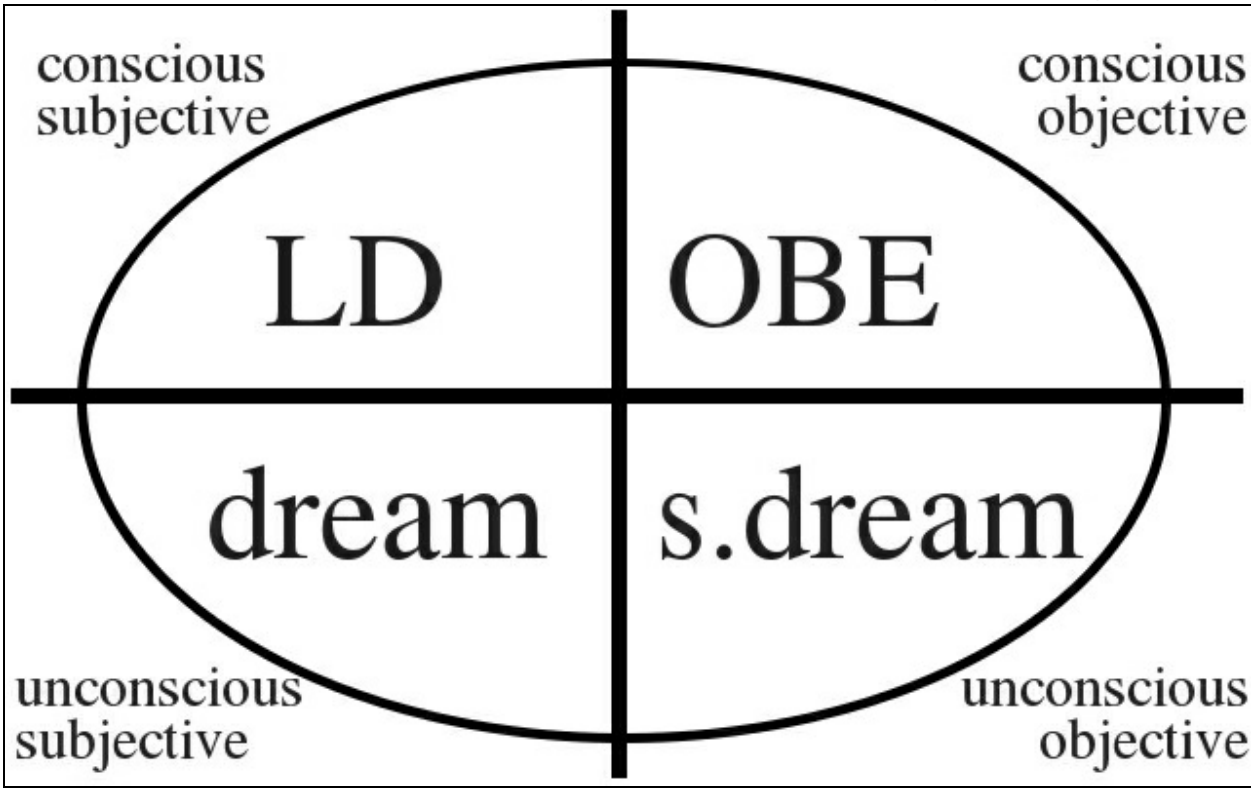



Figure 1. The Four OBE States

**Dream: unconscious and subjective**

In an ordinary dream, you're unconscious and your story of experience is a self-created hallucination: the subjective dream environment.

**Lucid dream (LD): conscious and subjective**

A lucid dream is when you become conscious and

aware, but you're still trapped inside the self-created dream hallucination.

**OBE: conscious and objective**

In an OBE, you are conscious and not hallucinating (at least no more than normal waking consciousness). You experience an objective reality. That's not to say that you're experiencing our normal physical reality, or that it bears any relation to it. It just seems to be more solid and persistent, and less susceptible to change due to expectations or direct manipulation.

**Shared dream: unconscious but objective**

Robert Moss describes shared dreams; experiences in which two or more people have similar "ordinary" dreams about the same place. [49] Though unconscious, their descriptions of the dream environment match. For example, two people might dream about seeing each other while near a bridge over a river, with the same red fish swimming below. The dreamers seem to experience the same objective reality, but it's not a conscious experience. Robert Waggoner cites examples of this as well. He also cites lucid dreams with shared content, which might very well be actual OBEs. [50]

You can gain access to the OBE state from the other three states. You can transition from lucid dreams (which are easier to produce) to OBEs simply by dispelling (by an act of will) the dream hallucination, after which you'll find yourself in a more objective OBE environment. The trick, of course, is to do that without waking your physical body (more on that in part 4.) Likewise, you can go from a shared dream to an OBE by becoming conscious. To transition from an ordinary dream to an OBE requires two hops: first to dispel the dream hallucination, then to gain lucidity.

**No hard boundaries**

At the beginning of the chapter I said that you could either be "conscious" or "unconscious." While that's a convenient way to think about it, there really aren't hard borders between the levels of consciousness as shown in the diagram. The transition between "conscious" and "unconscious" may be very steep and unforgiving (ask any anesthesiologist!), but there are varying degrees of consciousness; a continuum, that ranges from completely unconscious to hyper-conscious. Anyone who's seen me in the early morning has witnessed this firsthand! I'm quite groggy and it takes me a long time to become fully alert.

This blurring of the lines between conscious and unconscious is actually a loophole you can exploit to achieve out-of-body experience. This is an OBE technique I developed called "Sneaking Past the Gatekeeper" which is the subject of chapter 55.

There isn't even a hard line between "you" and your subconscious. As a matter of fact what you perceive as "you"—your conscious awareness—isn't even a single thing. It's more like a consensus. In my first conscious OBE, I had split awareness: I perceived myself to be five separate and distinct personalities, all interacting with one another, and at the same time, they were all "me."

There's also no hard border between "objective" and "subjective" experiences. Although it seems rare, in an OBE there can be a "bleed-through" of dream objects; dream elements may sometimes appear in an OBE. Similarly, in an ordinary or lucid dream, you may sometimes perceive an object from a more objective non-physical (OBE) environment.

Given the four out-of-body states, you now know the two things you need to induce an OBE: objective perception and conscious awareness (lucidity) while your body is unconscious. Now we can talk about the strategies to achieve that.

[47] Some books like Eben Alexander's Proof of Heaven contain pretty convincing proof that our experience extends beyond the brain. Alexander, a top neurosurgeon and brain doctor, was stricken with E. Coli bacterial meningitis, which is almost always fatal. The disease literally ravaged and shut down his brain's neocortex, which most scientists say is the source of consciousness. Despite that, he had a pretty amazing near-death experience (NDE), thus proving that "experience" can happen even when the brain's neocortex is not functioning.

[48] The Projection of the Astral Body , Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington, Weiser, 1929, pg. 123.

[49] Dreamgates , Robert Moss, Three Rivers Press, 1998, pg. 61-62.

[50] Lucid Dreaming , Robert Waggoner, Moment Point Press, 2009, chapter 16, "Mutual Lucid Dreaming."

# Chapter 11. The Three Strategies to OBE Induction

As I see it, there are three strategies to induce an OBE: direct, indirect, and through a lucid dream, [51] which are the subjects of parts 2, 3 and 4 of this book respectively.

**Direct strategy to induce OBEs**

Beginners always want to start with a direct strategy, which is the most difficult. They say, "Just tell me how to do it" as if it's a switch you can just turn on and off. If only it was that easy!

In chapter 6, I explained how most of us have five 90-minute sleep cycles on an average night. Lucidity is normally "turned off" when you enter each of these sleep cycles (near the hypnagogic state), and "turned on" at the end of each cycle (near the hypnopompic state). The "direct" strategy is to either (a) start from a fully conscious state and work your way down into the hypnagogic state, then use an "exit technique" to transition to the OBE, or (b) learn to extend the hypnopompic state and latch onto lucidity coming out of sleep, and then perform the exit technique. There are many direct exit techniques and I'll provide many of them in part 2. A good example is the "Lines of Force" technique from chapter 4.

**Indirect strategy to induce OBEs**

The idea behind the indirect strategy is to either harness or circumvent your subconscious mind and trick it into giving you back your lucidity. A good example is harnessing awareness during sleep paralysis (ASP) as I covered in chapter 7.

In terms of neuroscience, with an indirect strategy, you trick your brain into reactivating the connection to the medial pre-frontal cortex (mPFC). Techniques include subconscious

programming, mental ("energy") exercises to "loosen" the TPJ, and other subconscious coercion.

The indirect strategy is easier than the direct strategy, since your subconscious does all (or most) the work of inducing the OBE. It's also more effective than the direct strategy, since about 99% of all OBEs are spontaneous (initiated by the subconscious, not the conscious self).

I'll provide indirect techniques in part 3.

**Lucid dream strategy to initiate an OBE**

The lucid dream strategy is the fastest and easiest way to achieve OBEs because there are many effective methods to achieve lucid dreams. It's a two-step process: first you transition from a normal dream to a lucid dream (gain lucidity), and then you dispel the dream-hallucination and "wake up" in the OBE state. I'll cover that in part 4 of the book.

[51] Michael Raduga, author of The Phase classifies OBE strategies differently. In his worldview, "direct" means approaching the OBE from the hypnagogic state, whereas "indirect" means approaching the OBE from the hypnopompic state. Since all "direct" exit techniques can be done effectively in both the hypnagogic and hypnopompic states, I group them together.

# Part 2 - The Direct OBE Induction Strategy

# Chapter 12. Harnessing the Hypnagogic (Pre-Sleep) State

In chapter 6, I explained the circadian rhythms and how the brain "launders" itself during sleep in the nREM state within each 90-minute sleep cycle. You start each cycle almost fully conscious, then work your way down to the hypnagogic state before hitting nREM. When the nREM process is complete, you exit through the hypnopompic state on your way back to a nearly conscious state again before the next cycle begins. Both the hypnagogic and hypnopompic states may be used as a launchpad for an OBE with any of the direct OBE induction techniques.

**Imagination is the key**

We all know that if your brain is too active at night and you can't get your mind off of something, you can't sleep. In order to sleep, you need to relax and "let go." In other words, you surrender lucidity and give up control to your subconscious.

As you drift down toward the hypnagogic (pre-sleep) state, your mind starts to wander. Your subconscious expects this to a certain degree and it's happy to let you do it. You're free to use your imagination at this time. Since your imagination can override the decisions of the TPJ (as we saw in chapter 3), it's the fundamental key to the "direct" OBE strategy.

So with a pre-sleep approach, you basically have two choices: You can (a) use your imagination to conjure up your own images, sounds, and feelings, or (b) drift down deeper into sleep and patiently wait until hypnagogic hallucinations naturally appear in front of you. Most books recommend you use your imagination. It's harder, but keeps you in control. Waiting for naturally occurring hypnagogia is much easier, but you've got to go pretty

deep into sleep, during which you run the risk of losing control and falling asleep. I'll give you techniques for both.

**Important** : When you do an OBE visualization, try to convince yourself as much as possible that the image is "real." You and I both know it's not real; it's all imaginary, but the more you convince yourself it's real, the more your TPJ will accept it as part of your new "story of experience." You're basically dragging it into a fantasy world to force it to let go of real world perceptions.

That does not mean OBEs themselves are imaginary. Far from it. Imagination is merely a tool to get you to the OBE. You use your active imagination to override the TPJ's decisions about your story of experience. Once in the out-of-body state, you stop using your imagination and act normally. Well, as much as you can, given your new non-physical perspective!

**Notes about the hypnagogic state**

As you gain skill in OBE exploration and learn to retain consciousness deeper into the sleep state, you may notice strange things that happen at the threshold of sleep. As you explore the edges of consciousness and learn to pay more attention to the process of falling asleep, these strange things happen more often. Many times something goes wrong and you are startled awake. You may ask, "Is this related to OBEs, and if so, can I use it to achieve them?" The answer is yes, but it's hard to explain.

Almost all OBE authors agree that we have OBEs every night, but we're almost always unconscious and completely unaware it's happening. This is not conjecture; this is all based on my firsthand observations.

As you sink into a more relaxed state of mind, your mind begins to wander. Your brain's brainwaves slow from primarily alpha and beta down to slower theta waves. Most people

let their consciousness slip away pretty quickly at that point and that's the end of the story. Out go the lights.

If you retain consciousness beyond that, you enter the hypnagogic state. In this state, you start to see random images ("hypnagogic hallucinations") pop into your mind automatically. For example, you might see a river, then a woman's face, then a toaster. These are often very realistic three-dimensional images. It's almost a pre-dream state, although most dreaming occurs in REM sleep, which comes much later, at the end of each sleep cycle.

Hypnagogic hallucinations are often more than just visual. You may also hear very realistic sounds, such as bangs, bells, chimes, music, or voices saying random things; usually not coherent sentences, but fragments. For example, you might hear a man's voice say "...was at the corner when I saw for the first time..." and that's it. Then you might hear a woman say "...was twelve years old when Missy first walked to..." and so forth. It's also common to hear someone saying your name. These auditory hallucinations will be combined with the visual hallucinations. Bear in mind this is all completely normal: this happens to us every night, but we don't normally pay attention to it.

Normally, as you drift down toward unconsciousness, your "subconscious" gradually assumes control. This is the "gatekeeper" or "guardian of the threshold" I talked about in chapter 9. [52] One of its primary responsibilities is to make sure none of your conscious awareness gets through to "the other side," so it may play tricks with its defense mechanisms to prevent your waking consciousness from hanging on.

When I talk about the "subconscious mind" I'm not talking about a subtle, mindless robot that sits in the background as most people think. In my experience, it is a highly intelligent "other self" that's both self-aware and complex. It is another part of you,

but it has its own goals, motivations and will.

While inducing OBEs, it's extremely important not to play "what if" with hypnagogic images because that's the surest way to get sucked down into the depths of unconsciousness and fall asleep. It's a trap, so avoid it at all costs. In chapter 45, I give a technique to manipulate hypnagogic images to induce an OBE, but never ever play "what if" with them.

To prevent yourself from falling asleep, author Frederick Aardema suggests a powerful concept called an "Anchor." [53] He says "An anchor is a repetitive mental activity focused on a fixed pattern of thought. Its primary purpose is to keep your mind active enough to prevent it from falling asleep. Its secondary purpose is to prime your subconscious for the activity of projection; as you drift toward the borderline of sleep, the anchor will help you remember your original intent." One example he gives is energy work like the exercises I give in chapter 48. It doesn't really matter what you use for an anchor. It's just something to set your focus on to prevent yourself from drifting too much and getting caught up in the hypnagogic hallucinations.

Once you can clearly and consciously hear and see hallucinations in the hypnagogic state, you're ready to perform one of the exit techniques in the chapters below. But first we need to talk about its sister state: the hypnopompic state.

[52] Perhaps it's more correct to call it your "Higher Self", but I tend to think of my Higher Self as something that extends beyond the subconscious.

[53] Explorations In Consciousness , Frederick Aardema, Mount Royal Publishing, 2012, pg. 259 – 264.

# Chapter 13. Harnessing the Hypnopompic (Post-Sleep) State

Scientists call the end part of the sleep cycle the hypnopompic state, and there's little difference between it and its sister state, the hypnagogic state.

If you use the hypnopompic state to induce OBEs, you have four big advantages over the hypnagogic state because you take advantage of your physical body's natural circadian rhythms:

The techniques require little to no preparation, since your physical body is already fully relaxed and in the proper state for an OBE.
Since your mind is coming out of REM sleep, your brain's TPJ is already turned away from the physical senses.
It's easier to retain consciousness in the hypnopompic state. Since your body has momentum to start the next sleep cycle, it won't argue much about carrying lucidity forward.
Hypnopompic OBEs often last longer. Your body is coming out of REM, so when you re-enter a state of brain-body disassociation with lucidity, your brain treats it as an extension of REM sleep and it lasts longer.

To understand the hypnopompic approach, you need to look at the bigger overall sleep system. In other words, the rise and fall of various brain chemicals in the circadian sleep cycles.

**The rise of melatonin**

After the sun sets, the pineal gland in your brain produces the hormone melatonin, which makes you sleepy. This is largely controlled by the lack of light entering your eyes, especially blue light. With melatonin in your system, it's hard to retain

consciousness. That's why it's always better to do your OBE work in the morning.

## Melatonin depletion

For the sake of my earlier "laundry" analogy, let's say that melatonin is like laundry detergent for the brain. The pineal gland produces a certain amount at the beginning of the night, and some is used up with each of the sleep cycles. Throughout the night, the melatonin in your body is depleted. By morning, you've used up most of the melatonin. If you get too little sleep, you'll still be sleepy because of the leftover melatonin, and it may take a while to dissipate.

## Regaining lucidity

When the light hits your eyes through your closed eyelids the next morning, it triggers the production of other brain chemicals that bring back consciousness, and voila, you wake up.

## The OBE sweet spot

I said before that the average person sleeps about eight hours a day. If you analyze the brain chemicals in your system, at about six hours into sleep, your level of melatonin is still relatively high (sleep/laundry is still needed) but your brain is now relatively "clean" and ready for consciousness. Your brain has already started to produce the hormones required for lucidity. That's why the hypnopompic approach is better than the hypnagogic and why it's best to practice direct OBE techniques in the early morning, not before bed.

Under ordinary circumstances, if you interrupt a night's normal sleep pattern, the brain is forced to adjust its

schedule to fit the circumstances. If you immediately go back to sleep, the cycle will usually continue where it left off. If you stay awake, the brain is forced to assume lucidity "as is" for the rest of the day, and it plays catch-up on its brain cleaning process. That's why if you lose a lot of sleep, the quality of your consciousness deteriorates.

However, if you do something in between, namely, if you stay awake a while (which forces the brain to produce lucidity hormones) then go back to sleep, that's when things get interesting. That's the OBE sweet spot. That's the ideal state to perform your chosen exit technique. I'll go into more details about harnessing this principle in chapter 57, the "Wake Back To Bed" technique.

When you regain lucidity at the end of a sleep cycle (coming out of REM sleep), it's best to not move your body. If you move your body, it will give your TPJ a new frame of reference from which to build an in-the-body story of experience. Keep your body as relaxed as possible and don't move a muscle unless you have to, so it doesn't have that frame of reference.

So now you need to choose between hypnagogic (pre-sleep) and hypnopompic (post-sleep) OBE induction (or try them both). The next step is to choose which approach you want to take for direct OBE induction. You've got five choices, and that's the topic of the next chapter.

# Chapter 14. The Five Approaches to the Direct OBE Induction

Direct OBE exit techniques induce an OBE through the hypnagogic (pre-sleep) or hypnopompic (post-sleep) states. Before performing these exit techniques, either manipulate your consciousness down to the hypnagogic state (when you start to see and hear hallucinations) while retaining consciousness, or perform them as soon as you can after coming out of sleep in the hypnopompic state, as explained in the preceding two chapters. I'll give several techniques that use each approach in the coming chapters.

Direct exit techniques fall into roughly five categories, or "approaches." They are:

Visualization approach (use imaginary sight): hold onto a visualization while drifting down.
Motion-based approach (use imaginary motion): imagine motion relative to your position.
Tactile imagination approach (imaginary touch).
Auditory imagination approach (imaginary sound).
Hypnagogic image manipulation approach: allow yourself to drift down into sleep naturally, then control and manipulate a naturally occurring hypnagogic image.

The five approaches vary in difficulty and they all have advantages and disadvantages. The advantage of #1 (visualization) is that it's easier to retain awareness and not succumb to sleep, but the disadvantage is that it's hard to visualize with enough detail. The advantage of #2 (motion-based approach) is that the motion tends to be more stable than stationary objects, but you still need to visualize. The advantage of #3 (tactile imagination approach) is

that you don't need to visualize: All you do is hold onto the imaginary sense of touch, but the disadvantage is that you may be distracted by the other senses. Approach #4 (auditory approach) is similar to the others, but instead of using an imagined sense of sight or touch, you imagine sounds. The advantage of #4 is that you don't need complex visualizations. The disadvantage is that it's harder to change your TPJ's story of experience. The advantage of #5 (hypnagogic approach) is that the techniques are easy: you don't have to do any complex visualization because you take advantage of your own natural hypnagogic images. The disadvantage is that it takes discipline to remain alert that far down into sleep.

As I said in the introduction, everyone has a unique psychological makeup, so different techniques work for different people. Some people are better at using visual imagination, so visualization techniques may work best for them. Others may find auditory or tactile techniques work better. The bottom line is that you may need to try a variety of techniques before you find one that works for you. You should memorize a technique and thoroughly understand its principles before trying it. Also, don't just try a technique and then give up if it doesn't work the first time. Try it several times, under varying conditions for several days before you give up and move on to the next.

**Visualization Approach: Imaginary Sight**

This is by far the most popular category of techniques in the OBE literature. Almost every OBE book gives a handful of these. The idea here is to never give your subconscious the chance to take complete control. Before you're fully in the hypnagogic state, you visualize any small object. The example I gave in my first book is to visualize a cube, but it can be anything. I love to

use octahedrons, which look like two pyramids with their bases glued together (or 8-sided dice, if you're into role playing games). I also like to visualize something simple like a single grain of rice, a grain of salt, or a cube of sugar, because they're easy to visualize and I've seen millions of them. Graham Nicholls suggests geometric shapes like triangles and circles. [54]

According to Keith Morgan, the important thing is to visualize the image as realistically as possible. [55] That's my experience as well, which I explained in my second book, Lessons Out of the Body . [56] It's not just realism, but absorption too. Try to become totally absorbed in the object you visualize. I also recommend you use your imagination to spin the object, which will help stabilize it (a visualization tends to fade away or disappear unless you keep it moving). Try to "stare into" the scene rather than staring "at" the scene. You do all this as you inch ever closer to sleep, while at the same time, you narrow your consciousness down into a tiny pinpoint of awareness. You also need to turn your attention away from the physical body and its senses.

Some people find it difficult to visualize with enough clarity, so this approach isn't for everyone. These techniques work best for people who can't seem to go deep enough to actually see hypnagogic images. But if you get deep enough, your visualizations may compete with your own natural hypnagogic hallucinations.

**Motion-Based Approach: Imaginary actions**

The motion-based approach is really an extension to the visualization approach. These techniques are so easy and effective for some people I think they deserve their own category. They're technically just visualizations—not that much different

than the others—but instead of visualizing a spinning or rotating object, you also move or interact with them in your imagination.

**Tactile Imagination Approach: Imaginary Touch**

The pioneer for this category of techniques is Robert Bruce, author of Astral Dynamics . A blind man asked him for an alternative technique, since he couldn't visualize, so Bruce developed his "Rope" technique. [57] Many people misinterpret Bruce's technique and visualize themselves climbing up a rope, but that wasn't the point. The point was to forget your sense of sight altogether and imagine only the sense of touch : imagine how the rope feels, the sensations of your muscles as you pull yourself up, and so on. Since there's a high density of nerve endings in the hands, this technique redirects a large area of the brain's sense of touch.

Again, it's important to develop a sense of realism. With tactile imagination, try to convince yourself, "This is the real me," or "These are my real arms," with regard to the imagined sense of touch.

**Auditory Imagination Approach: Imaginary Sound**

My friend John developed this technique to induce OBEs because he was bad at visualization. He was, however, very good at using his imagination to pretend a favorite song was playing. He discovered that if he kept it up long enough, it led to the pre-OBE vibrations.

This technique takes advantage of the fact that the brain's auditory cortex (the area that processes sounds) is close (distance-wise) to the brain's temporoparietal junction (TPJ), as we talked about in chapter 3.

**Hybrid or Multi-Sensory Approaches**

Since the TPJ determines your story of experience by polling data from sight, sound, and touch, it makes perfect sense to combine the previous approaches to create a hybrid approach. In other words, feed it false (imaginary) information from multiple senses at the same time. It may be more effective to combine:
visualization with auditory imagination.
visualization with tactile imagination.
auditory imagination with tactile imagination.
or all three. You can throw taste and smell in there too if you want.

**Hypnagogic Image Manipulation Approach: Take Control of Hypnagogic Images**

This approach is somewhat easier than the previous ones because it doesn't require the use of visualization or imagination. It just takes patience, and that's why it's my favorite category of techniques.

It's similar to the visualization approach, but instead of visualizing, you just wait for a usable hypnagogic image to naturally appear, then take control of it. This is easier than using your own visualization but you must have patience. First, you need to be patient enough to wait for hypnagogic images to appear in the first place, which requires you to get pretty close the sleep. Second, you need to patiently wait for a suitable object to appear. It's nearly impossible to take control of some images. For example, landscapes, lakes, mountains, and faces. A couple days ago I saw a stadium full of people and had to pass it up and wait for the next image. It's easy to take control of ordinary objects like a bicycle, a coffee cup or a pencil.

Once a suitable object appears in front of you, focus on it and take control of it, start making it spin, or swing it back and forth. The difference here is that you're letting your subconscious have a bit more control during the process, but you

have to train yourself to remain alert.

In my second book, I amended my primary OBE induction technique from the first book: instead of visualizing an object like a cube, I recommended waiting for a hypnagogic image to naturally appear in front of you, then taking control of that and swinging it around the same way. [58]

Now that you know the five basic approaches to direct OBE induction, it's time to learn how to prepare for the OBE. The good news is that the same preparation applies to all the direct exit techniques.

[54] Navigating the Out-of-Body Experience , Llewellyn Publications, Graham Nicholls, pg. 130-133.

[55] Easy Astral Projection , Keith Morgan, Pentacle Enterprises, 1992, pg. 8.

[56] Lessons Out of the Body , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2001, pg. 208.

[57] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 102.

[58] Lessons Out of the Body , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2001, chapter 29.

# Chapter 15. Preparing For Liftoff: Mental Preparation

When you make an OBE attempt, you should be mentally prepared. For example, you don't want to attempt OBEs if you're worried, nervous, anxious, or afraid. You should be as calm, relaxed, and passive as possible. The most important of these is to be passive. Surprisingly, belief in OBEs is not required. As a matter of fact, I didn't believe OBEs were possible when I had my first run-in. It does help to suspend disbelief, but even that's not required as long as you remain open-minded.

**Eliminate Negativity and Assume a Positive Attitude**

If you look at the history of mystical experiences, you'll find a lot of people who developed a deep love and reverence toward life, spirit and God. For example, one of the primary teachings of the Dalai Lama is compassion. The famous yogi Paramahansa Yogananda wrote that you should have undying love and devotion to God until God responds in kind. In other words, make it clear to God that you won't give up until you get the mystical experiences you're after.

Do mystical states like OBEs make you more loving or does the loving attitude make you more likely to have OBEs? I believe it's the latter. Neuroscientists Andrew Newberg and Mark Waldman seem to agree. In more than one of their books, they wrote about how important it is to have an attitude of serenity and compassion in order to achieve mystical states.

Many occultists and OBE practitioners also say it's best to approach the OBE with a positive attitude. They often say you need to "raise your vibrations" in order to elicit the help of non-physical entities who can help you out of your body. Conversely,

many OBE authors say negative emotions block your ability to induce OBEs. [59] They say if you maintain negative, selfish, or pessimistic attitudes, "your vibrations will be so low" that you'll remain anchored in your physical body and never achieve OBEs. It will be as if your non-physical feet are encased in concrete, and if you do achieve an OBE, you'll find yourself in a "lower plane" where you're more likely to have negative encounters and meet unsavory creatures.

Given the sad state of affairs in the world today, how do you assume a more positive attitude? Eliminate negative influences in your life. For example, delete all negative music from your phone or music player and replace it with music that's move positive, uplifting and loving. Watch less television, especially the news. Try to change your attitude to be more loving. Do some of the mindfulness meditation I wrote about in chapter 2. Author Tom Llewellyn tells the story of a well-known Indian Baba called Neem Karoli Baba:

> "Once a western disciple came up to him and asked him 'How to meditate.' Initially the Baba told him to go away but as the Westerner was leaving the Baba said 'Just meditate like Christ.'...Later the disciple came to him and asked him what he meant. The old Baba closed his eyes and seemed to disappear for a few minutes. When he came back and opened his eyes, he had tears in his eyes. 'He lost himself in love. He loved everyone, even those that crucified him. That is the way to meditate, just be like Christ or Gandhi. Just lose yourself in love.'" [60]

**Make a plan, then set it aside**

People—even the most focused ones—tend to be very

ADD (attention deficit disorder) during an OBE. It's very easy to get distracted and stop what you're doing to investigate something that catches your non-physical eye. So it's always best to set your goals ahead of time. Make a list of what you want to do in your OBEs, prioritize them, then pick one before you even start your technique. Do you want to visit your grandmother who passed away? Do you want to fly to outer space or contact a religious figure? Decide beforehand, then **set it aside** until you're actually in the OBE.

Be careful not to let thoughts about your goals interfere with your OBE attempt. To achieve an OBE, you need to focus your mind as much as possible. If you're even a little bit distracted by your goals, you'll never induce one. So make a plan beforehand, then set it aside and don't think about it again until you're all the way out-of-body.

**OBE Mindset and Rituals**

I know many authors / writers who can't write (or write productively) until they achieve a proper mindset. They can't write in their home office, for example, or on their desktop computer because that's a "home" environment that inhibits their creativity: that's where they balance the checkbook, check email, and pay bills. They use a special laptop just for writing. They can't be around their kids or spouse; even if they're three rooms away, it's too distracting. They often do their best writing when they take their laptop to a favorite coffee shop or restaurant (which is paradoxically more noisy), and it has to be in the morning. They have to turn off their phone, shut out all distractions and tell themselves, "I'm not here to socialize; I'm here to write, and that's all I'm going to do."

All of these special conditions and habits put them in a certain creative or "writing" frame of mind. When these habits are

properly done, the subconscious mind lets the creative juices flow, and the writing happens almost on its own, like magic, or channeling, or a brain dump. In other words, they develop and use a "writing ritual" to help them achieve a perfect state of mind.

It helps to develop a similar procedure or ritual for inducing OBEs.

Rituals establish a solemn mindset; a purpose, a set of goals and directions to the subconscious, a sense of sacredness or a feeling that "this is special." It also develops a "habit of intent." In fact, there's very little difference between what my author friends do and what occultists do when they go to their special room, stand in front of an altar, light candles, burn incense, say prayers of protection, and all the rest. Rituals are a mainstay of occult practice, including its approach to OBEs. There's no magic to inducing an OBE; the ritual is just a way to focus both the conscious and subconscious mind, and that's what you need: razor sharp focus.

So develop some healthy OBE habits or rituals and repeat them whenever you try to induce an OBE. For example, go to your favorite OBE couch, at your favorite practice time, wearing your favorite OBE clothes. Shut out all distractions. Say your preferred prayers of protection or mantras of focus. Some people choose to burn a favorite incense or "smudge" the room by burning some white sage. Others perform energy bouncing techniques like the ones I give in chapter 48. The most important thing, however, is to focus your OBE intent. Make your ritual divide your OBE practice from your normal daily routine: "This is my OBE time now."

**Assuming the right attitude**

It also helps to assume a certain attitude for your OBE attempt. You should leave all your cares and worries behind; you

can deal with them afterward. You should be desirous of an OBE and optimistic. Never kick yourself for past failures.

Be positive and optimistic. Trust that it will happen when the time is right. Assume a calm attitude of "I'm going to just see what happens." It also helps to assume an attitude of surrender and letting go: letting go of the physical body is the ultimate surrender of control, and that can be terrifying, but you're not going to let that stop you, right? It's a little easier if you make an agreement with yourself to ride it out and "just see what happens," especially if you add "a little while longer."

Andrew Newberg and Mark Waldman recommend similar steps to induce "enlightenment" experiences. The five steps they give are: Desire, Prepare, Engage, Surrender, and Reflect. [61] If you apply their principles to OBEs, the steps might look like this:

Desire the OBE.
Prepare for it through relaxation and awareness exercises. Yawn several times, which preps your brain for the experience, dropping the neural activity in the prefrontal cortex (PFC). [62] I'll talk about relaxation in the next chapter.
Engage in an OBE ritual of your choice. Choose the proper environment, circumstances, prayers, and so forth, to set the mood and subconscious expectations.
Surrender and immerse yourself completely in the OBE attempt.
Set aside some time afterward to deeply reflect on what happened during your attempt, your feelings, thoughts and sensations that occurred in your attempt.

Before you start, you may also want to do some super-slow physical exercises like stretching, yoga, Tai Chi or Qigong. This will build up the activity in the PFC before you drop it in step

2 like I talked about briefly in chapter 3. In William Buhlman's class at the Monroe Institute, most of the students do group yoga at the start of each day. (I prefer Tai Chi.)

Whether or not you use an OBE "ritual" you should still prepare your physical environment and follow some best practices. That's the topic of the next chapter.

[59] For example, Albert Taylor wrote "The feeling of anger is extremely pernicious to the chain of events which lead to an OBE. Any and all negative emotions will likely stifle any attempts you make to achieve a higher state of consciousness." ( Soul Traveler , Verity Press Publishing, 1996, pg. 90)

[60] The Initiation , Tom Llewellyn, self-published, pg. 105.

[61] How Enlightenment Changes Your Brain , Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman, Penguin Random House, 2016, pg. 194 – 195.

[62] _____, pg. 204.

# Chapter 16. Preparing For Liftoff: Physical Preparation

Direct exit techniques require some physical preparation, as opposed to indirect techniques in which your subconscious does all the work. This is especially true when you perform them going into sleep. When you perform them coming out of sleep, you don't need to be as picky, since your awareness is already focused on inner events.

You don't need ideal conditions to induce an OBE, but the closer you can get to ideal, the more likely you are to succeed. Certain conditions are required for success. For example, relaxation is required. If you're not fully relaxed; the tension in your body will most likely prevent the OBE. Other conditions are more optional. Silence is one of those more optional conditions: you might not be able to block out all noise in your living space, but it's not a show-stopper. I realize that you may not be able to follow all these guidelines, so just do the best you can to practice your OBEs under ideal conditions.

## Physical preparation

In chapter 3 I talked about the Temporoparietal Junction (TPJ) which determines your "story of experience" by analyzing data from the senses and filtering it through your circumstances, beliefs and assumptions. To shift your TPJ from an "in-the-body" to "out-of-body" experience you first need to reduce all that sense data to a trickle, then feed it with false information from your imagination. Here's what I recommend, and why:

### Practice in Darkness

Mute the body's sense of sight as much as possible to reduce the

TPJ's available sight data to a trickle. Practice in a room that's either very dark or very dimly lit. I prefer a totally black room for inducing OBEs. Some people require a little bit of light coming in from the windows. [63] You may need to experiment with the amount of light until you find what works best for you. If you can't use a darkened room, wear a sleep mask. Some people set half ping-pong balls over their eyes to create a uniformly gray field of vision. This special eyewear was developed for Ganzfeld experiments in parapsychology.

**Close your eyes**

Close your eyes and keep them closed during your exit technique, for the same reason.

**Silence is golden**

Mute your body's sense of sound as much as possible. I prefer total silence for inducing OBEs. If your environment has distractions, like lawn mowers in the background, use ear plugs or headphones to block the sound. You can also use white noise, pink noise, binaural beats, or even an electric fan to drown out the noise. If you live close to an airport or train tracks, don't be discouraged. Our subconscious learns to ignore those familiar sounds, so you shouldn't have a problem.

**Be comfortable or slightly uncomfortable**

Most OBE authors agree that you should mute the body's sense of touch as much as possible, but you may need to adjust your level of comfort based on how heavy a sleeper you are. Make the body comfortable. Wear loose-fitting clothing and keep your mind off your body as much as you can. For the same reason, make sure you are both warm enough and cool enough. Some authors recommend you be slightly uncomfortable when you practice. Daniel Kai says if you're too comfortable, you can drift down into too deep a sleep. One of his techniques actually uses an electric

blanket to make you uncomfortably hot while you practice! [64] Robert Bruce also recommends you be slightly uncomfortable to help you stay alert during your OBE attempt. [65] The important thing is to not be distracted because you're uncomfortable, and don't let the sense of touch impede your TPJ's altered story of experience.

**Lie on your back (if possible) or sit up**

I've had OBEs in every possible body position, but it's easiest if I'm lying on my back with my face up. Some OBE books call this the "supine," "wand," or "corpse" position. I usually rest my hands on the tops of my hips. If you can't lie on your back, try it on your side, but beware: most people are preconditioned by years of habit to fall asleep on their side. I'm rarely successful on my stomach because my back is unnaturally arched. Many people are preconditioned to fall asleep if they're lying down, regardless of their position. In that case, practice sitting up, as long as you're comfortable enough for your body to sleep. Daniel Kelley suggests the ideal position is sitting up at a 45 degree angle, like from a hospital bed. [66]

**Light trance**

Go into your OBE practice in a little bit of a trance. Aim for that "alpha" brain wave where you "stare off into space." I'm often a bit groggy in the morning, so I've got this one down!

**Where to practice**

**Anywhere but your bedroom (unless there's no other choice.)**

The reason is that you're conditioned to fall asleep in your bedroom, in your bed, and often in a certain position. You will retain lucidity better if you break these habits.

**Not next to your spouse or anyone (if possible.)**

I've always found it much more difficult to induce the OBE state if

I'm lying next to my wife in bed. William Buhlman, author of Adventures Beyond the Body, told me the same thing in a personal conversation. It's possible and I've done it, but for some reason it seems more difficult.

**A place with no interruptions.**

Any thought of being interrupted can be enough to distract you from the OBE. If a cat jumps on you, it's a problem, but even the worry that it might (or can) is just as bad. The same goes for dogs nosing you, telephones ringing, text messages, solicitors knocking, alarm clocks ringing, and all other interruptions. Try to prevent them as much as possible when you practice.

**A peaceful place.**

It's almost as important to pick a peaceful place to practice. If you try to induce OBEs at your workplace, for example, you might carry subconscious tension that can interfere.

**Favorite couch / chair / spare bedroom.**

Many people prefer to do their OBE work from a favorite couch, overstuffed chair, or from a bed in the spare bedroom. These are all good places to practice. It's even better to set aside a special chair or couch for OBE practice. It achieves what the occultist does when he or she performs a ritual: it sets up an unconscious OBE mindset or sub-conscious intent.

**Hotel and motel rooms.**

Many people report OBEs when they're at hotels or motels. The change of location often forces a larger amount of consciousness to be aware of your surroundings when you sleep. It's that "sleep with one eye open" adage because you're in an unfamiliar place. Hotel rooms also have fewer distractions and interruptions.

**Meditation rooms, "CHEC units," isolation chambers, and flotation tanks**

Some people find it easier to induce OBEs in a special room set up for this purpose, like a meditation room, isolation chamber, or flotation tank. The Monroe Institute developed special tiny rooms called "CHEC units" at their OBE facilities. Some people believe that locations like this can actually "accumulate" attributes favorable to inducing OBEs from all the people who used them before you. [67] I don't know if that theory is valid, but at the very least, your subconscious mind associates these places with OBE activity, which sets a proper mindset. The IAC has a facility in Portugal designed for inducing OBEs. They believe that the OBE intent is attached to that location, so every OBE session unconsciously influences and helps the next person with their OBEs.

**When to practice**

Practice in the early morning, if possible. Many people make the mistake of trying to induce OBEs right before bed when they're physically too tired. At night, the brain has too much of the hormone melatonin, so you're too drowsy to stay alert. You want to hit that "sweet spot" I talked about earlier.

Although many people have success in the early morning, I've always had more success when I oversleep; when I lounge around in bed until 8:00 or 9:00. When I was younger, I was even more persistent and stayed in bed practicing until 11:00 or even later.

Another good time to practice is during a mid-day nap, if possible. [68]

**Video Games, Virtual Reality and Video Drones**

I don't recommend playing video games immediately before your actual OBE attempts because it may create tension that's hard to eliminate. When playing a video game, your TPJ temporarily accepts a new story of experience, even though your

body schema remains unchanged. This may condition the TPJ to more readily accept shifts in experience. The OBE literature in general says virtually nothing at all about video games, but some research may indicate people who play video games may be more likely to have OBEs than people who don't. [69]

It may be even more effective to use virtual reality (VR) or video drones that send visual data to a VR mask. I'll talk more about that in chapter 76.

**Sea Legs and Boating**

In chapter 5 of my first book, I talked about a swaying sensation I often feel during OBE attempts. [70] It feels like I'm floating in water. I also like to fish, and after I spend hours on a boat, I often have "sea legs," another artificial rocking sensation. My OBE swaying was different from "sea legs" and if I practiced after fishing, I'd feel them both at the same time. I tend to think that boating interferes with your TPJ's sense of stability, and therefore makes it easier to induce OBEs.

**Sleep Deprivation**

There aren't many references to sleep deprivation in the OBE literature. Daniel Kai's book is a notable exception that recommends sleep deprivation. [71] Sleep research indicates that sleep deprivation causes REM intrusion (hallucinations), affects the vestibular system (sense of balance and orientation) and the TPJ, and contributes to sleep paralysis. [72] Susan Blackmore's first OBE occurred when she was severely sleep deprived. However, some authors, such as D.V. Nobles, recommend plenty of sleep. [73] I've always had the most success with sleep deprivation followed by oversleeping.

**Other things to avoid**

Deadlines.

Music. I'm a music lover and listen to it a lot. I even use it to program my subconscious (see chapter 53). However, in my experience it's better to avoid all music at least 24 hours before attempting an OBE. That includes "chill music" to help you relax. It's okay to listen to mind-altering sounds like binaural beats, hemi-sync, infra-liminal sounds, etc., before or even during your OBE attempt; just not music. I suspect it's because music divides your subconscious focus. It could also be because the "music processing area" of the brain (in the auditory cortex in the temporal lobe of the brain) is located at the right TPJ (rTPJ).

Television. You should also minimize your television watching for 24 hours before OBEs, for the same reason. It's a distraction that kills your focus and numbs your brain. It does the thinking for you. It overloads your brain with lots of visual and auditory data and relieves you from exercising your active imagination. It's much more productive to do things that force your mind to focus on inner events, such as reading, daydreaming, and meditation. Video games are okay, though, because they train you to focus your mind away from your body. In most video games, you focus your control on an extension of your body, forcing you to "act" without being focused on your body.

Alcohol and mind-altering drugs. However, there may be a special exception for cannabis / marijuana, which I'll talk about in chapter 67.

**Other considerations: rumors, superstitions, and folklore**

A lot of OBE books recommend a lot of obscure things. As far as I'm concerned, most of these fall into the category of folklore, superstitions, and the like. In other words, I can't find any scientific or even pseudo-science basis for them. But since they're still worth mentioning.

**Body orientation.** Robert Monroe recommended pointing your body North when trying to induce OBEs. [74] OBE authors have been parroting that for years, citing various beliefs about the Earth's magnetic fields. I've successfully induced OBEs with my body facing all directions, but oddly enough, I have my best luck when my body is pointing West. I have my worst luck when my body is pointing North. When I induced the vibrations the first time, my body was pointing West, so perhaps it's more effective to point the direction you did during your first successful experience. In the end, this is just another variable you can alter. If you have no success inducing OBEs, consider changing the direction your body faces.

**Moon cycles.** Some people insist that they are most successful at inducing OBEs during the full moon and the few days surrounding it. I've never found a correlation between my OBEs and moon cycles, so again, chock this up to folklore, but it's something to bear in mind.

**Fasting.** Some people claim that fasting, eating your last meal earlier in the day, or eating only a very light meal can help with inducing OBEs. For example, Luiz Roberto Mattos mentions "light meals" almost every chapter of his book. [75] I'll go into more detail about this in chapter 71, Dietary Considerations.

**Electronics.** Some experts claim that electronics interfere with your ability to induce OBEs, but I'm unaware of any science to back it up. At Monroe Institute classes, everyone is asked to keep their cellphones powered off. It's standard procedure for all their classes. You're allowed to turn them on to check emails occasionally, but must turn them off afterward. Daniel Kelly also recommends not practicing your OBEs or even sleeping with electronics in the room. [76]

## Set OBE intentions and expectations

Before inducing an out-of-body experience, it's important to set your intentions. Intentions are like affirmations; they're special instructions to your subconscious mind, in this case, to tell it to bring on an OBE. Since you're about to wander the edge of consciousness, you'll be very close to the sleep state where the subconscious normally takes over, so you definitely want to point it in the right direction. Intentions are especially important when it comes to inducing lucid dreams because you need to tell your subconscious to restore conscious awareness after you've fallen asleep.

For direct OBE induction, you want your subconscious to not misinterpret what you want, or it's likely to fall into old habits of just making you fall asleep. So spend at least ten seconds to remind yourself (your subconscious mind) that you intend to have an OBE, and mentally ask for assistance with it.

I know this is a science-oriented book, and this is not a scientific statement, but even if your subconscious ignores you, "something else" might hear your silent request and provide help. A disembodied spirit or spirit guide (if you believe in them), might overhear your request and help. In fact, Nick Barrett relies heavily upon asking for help from spirit guides. [77] If not a spirit, maybe a guardian angel, invisible helper, "God" or whatever other force you choose to believe in. Even if you don't believe in spirits, angels, helpers, or even God, these things are still a part of your psyche (or subconscious), so they still may be able to help you induce an OBE. Help is out there, regardless of the source.

## Notes on breathing

Before you  begin your technique, take two or three normal deep breaths, then try to slow down your breath. Don't force your breath to be abnormally slow. I'll go into more detail

about proper breathing in chapter 64, Breath Work and Proper Breathing.

**Proper Relaxation for OBEs**

Quick and deep relaxation is of paramount importance to inducing OBEs. To induce an OBE, you need to relax your physical body as completely as possible. The goal is to almost eliminate your sense of touch so the TPJ can't use it to determine your body's circumstances. Ideally, you should relax your body to the point where you don't even feel it anymore. In the ideal state of relaxation, you should be able to imagine your arms or legs in a different physical position and convince yourself that it's plausible.

Almost all OBE books recommend that you use "progressive relaxation" in which you systematically go from your feet to your head and relax each body part at a time. Many books say that as you focus on each body part, you should briefly tense its muscles, then let them go. In other words, (optionally tense and) relax your feet, then forget about them. Then (optionally tense and) relax your calves, then forget about them. Then move to your hamstrings, etc. Eventually make your way up your entire torso, systematically relaxing each body part. Many books spend more time relaxing the individual muscles in your head because we hold so much tension there: separately relax your neck muscles, jaw muscles, cheeks, forehead, and so forth. You can also reverse the order and go from your head to your feet, but I don't think that's as effective.

A few books (like Michael Raduga's The Phase ) say not to waste too much time doing relaxation; your time is better spent focusing your mind away from the body rather than on the body. In other words, just try to relax the whole physical body and forget about it.

I do something much more simple and effective than

progressive relaxation. I imagine a friendly helper gently drapes my body with a warm comfortable blanket of loving energy. I imagine the blanket of energy settles over my body, soaks down through it like a paper towel soaks up water, and it brings waves of relaxation as it does. When the blanket gets to the bottom of my body and soaks it entirely, I imagine another blanket is draped on me. I keep draping these imaginary blankets until my entire body is completely relaxed. It usually only takes about five or six blankets, and my entire body is relaxed in less than thirty seconds. At this point, it's very common for me to feel intense tingling in my body, and sometimes that develops into the vibrations.

Some authors say to relax your body as quickly as you can. Dr. Douglas M. Baker writes that relaxation "must be done rapidly; as rapidly as you might have done at the end of that long drive in your automobile! It is just as if your body is a sack of corn that is suddenly thrown on the floor." [78]

Michael Raduga also recommends a rapid-relaxation method he calls "Forced Falling Asleep" where you try to fall asleep as quickly as possible, but while maintaining the intention of not losing consciousness. [79]

Darryl Berry takes it a step further with his signature technique, the "Relax-Move Technique" [80] in which you move your physical body into a different physical position (also known as an "Asana" or body position in yoga) every minute or two, then try your chosen exit technique. The constant switching of body positions trains you to relax as quickly as possible. So it's flop, try to exit, flop, try to exit, etc.

The science behind the need for quick relaxation goes back to our discussion about the brain's prefrontal cortex (PFC) in chapter 3. Remember that most mystical experiences occur when there's a rapid drop in neural activity in the PFC; the key word is

"rapid." The faster you can relax your body, the faster your brain will drop its neural activity in the PFC.

**Dealing with itches**

Many beginners complain that their body itches when they practice, yet they don't itch when they fall asleep naturally at night. My theory is that when you're conscious, the TPJ expects a certain amount of input from the sense of touch. When you starve it for touch data through relaxation, it doesn't have enough information to verify its body location and orientation so it creates an itch: It's prodding you to give it touch data to confirm its belief of your body location. But when you're asleep (or falling asleep), your TPJ identifies with a self-created internal body schema, so it doesn't want the input because that would wake you up. So itching is a sign that you are too conscious, i.e., not "deep" enough, and often, not relaxed enough. You need to just let go and forget about your body like you do when falling asleep.

My rule of thumb is: if you have an itch in the first several minutes, while you're still relaxing and not very close to sleep, just scratch it and continue with your OBE technique. If it happens again, scratch, but keep trying to focus your mind and work your way closer to sleep.

If you're pretty close to sleep and you've been lying there a long time, try to ignore the itch and focus your mind away from it. Tell yourself "That's not my concern" and continue with your chosen exit technique. In less than a minute, the itch should slowly fade. If it doesn't fade after a minute and you become too distracted by it, just scratch it and move on, but that will often send you backward in the process: you'll need to redouble your effort to relax and refocus.

**After you relax**

Once your physical body is fully relaxed, it's time to start your exit technique. There are only a few more things to bear in mind at this point. They are:

**Drift down to the very edge of sleep.** As you focus your mind down, allow yourself to drift down closer and closer to sleep. You've got to get as close to sleep as possible without actually succumbing to it.

**Do NOT fall asleep.** With your body so relaxed, it's easy to fall asleep. There's a delicate balance between "too awake" and "too asleep." You need to walk the edge of consciousness, but not get too close to either side. I call this the "tightrope." [81]

**Don't let your mind wander.** Be careful. If you let your mind wander, you'll be quickly drawn down into sleep. If you find your mind wandering, bring it back to the task at hand and re-focus.

**Imagine you're floating weightlessly inside your body.**

Pretend you're floating weightlessly inside your physical body, like an empty bottle floating atop gentle waves that never stop, or perhaps like water inside a bottle that rocks back and forth, making the water slosh rhythmically. Affirm that this rocking/floating sensation will continue forever. Tell yourself that this gentle weightless floating will continue no matter what; even if you fall asleep.

You want to create something known in psychology as Illusory Movement Experiences, or IMEs. One example is "sea legs" which we talked about earlier. Research suggests IMEs often precede out-of-body feelings, and might be the most important component for inducing OBEs. [82] For many people, this step may be enough; no other OBE induction techniques are needed.

At this point, you need to focus your mind into a single

thread of awareness, even as the rocking sensations continue. Learning to properly focus your mind is complex enough that it deserves its own chapter.

[63] The body's circadian rhythms are naturally governed by light. Neuroscientists have known for a long time that lucidity is triggered by light coming in through the closed eyelids, which stimulates the brain to release brain chemicals to induce consciousness. That's why people naturally sleep more in the winter when the days are shorter, and less in the summer. It's also why over-stimulation from artificial light causes sleep disorders. Thankfully, computers and cell phones are now starting to use programs like "Red Shift" and "Night Light" to adjust display screens to favor red-tones after sunset.

[64] Astral Projection: Interdimensional Guide for Out of Body Experiences , Daniel Kai, self-published, chapter 7.

[65] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 306.

[66] Behind the Veil , Daniel Kelley, 2018.

[67] The IAC uses the term "thosene" (abbreviation of thought + sentiment + emotion) to describe how places accumulate the thoughts, sentiments, and emotions of the people who visit. A tavern might have a "thosene" that encourages drinking alcohol, whereas an OBE lab might have a "thosene" that assists in producing OBEs.

[68] Personal conversation with William Buhlman.

[69] Seeing Myself , Susan Blackmore, Robinson, 2017, pg. 232. "Studying gamers with fMRI showed more activity in the left angular gyrus at the TPJ for avatar referencing than for self-and other-referencing (Ganesh et al., 2012)"

[70] Out of Body Experiences, Robert Peterson, 1997, 2013, pg. 30.

[71] Astral Projection , Daniel Kai, 2015, pg. 27: "More often than not, I noticed

that my sleep paralysis episodes happened at times when I had been very busy at work, so I was quite sleep deprived."

[72] Seeing Myself , Susan Blackmore, Robinson, 2017, pg. 145, Journal of Sleep Research , Quarck, Ventre, Etard, & Denise, 2006, 15(4), pg. 369-375.

[73] Journey Into the Unknown , D.V. Nobles, self published, 2015, pg. 11. "Lack of sleep inhibits the experience."

[74] Journeys Out of the Body , Robert Monroe, Doubleday, 1977 edition, pg. 211

[75] Astral Projection as a Bridge to the Spiritual World , Luiz Roberto Mattos, Self Published, 2017.

[76] Behind the Veil , Daniel Kelley, 2018.

[77] Spirit Guided Lucid Dreaming , Nick Barrett, self published, 2012, throughout.

[78] Practical Techniques of Astral Projection, Dr. Douglas M. Baker, The Aquarian Press, pg. 56.

[79] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 123.

[80] Travel Far , Darryl E. Berry Jr, Next Density Publishing, 2015, pg. 131.

[81] Lessons Out of the Body , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2001, chapter 22, "How OBE Is Like Tightrope Walking."

[82] Seeing Myself: The new science of out-of-body experiences , Susan J. Blackmore, Robinson, 2017, pg 155.

# Chapter 17. How to Focus Your Mind for an OBE

In order to self-induce an out-of-body experience from a conscious state (as opposed to transitioning from a lucid dream, etc.), you need to focus your mind down into a tiny pinpoint of awareness. At least I do. It's like the old Zen Buddhist saying: "We cannot see our reflection in running water. It is only in still water that we can see." You need to turn off all the noisy thoughts in your head. In other words, stop your mind from wandering from one thought to the next. Rein it in so you only focus on one thing at a time. It starts with eliminating all the monkey-chatter inside your head and ends in crystal clear focus. In my first book, I call it "quiescing" the mind. [83]

Neuroscientists talk about "task positive" thought where you utilize the task positive network (TPN) of the brain to perform a specific task. That's "concentration." When you're idle, you switch to the default mode network (DMN) of the brain where your mind is wandering or daydreaming (more about that in chapter 72.) When I talk about focusing for an OBE, I'm talking about something halfway between the TPN and the DMN. You want to achieve a single-mindedness or "focus" that is not goal-directed. Your focus is not directed at something (so not exactly TPN), and yet it's not wandering either (so not exactly DMN). Yes, your goal is to achieve an OBE, but it's more like shutting down and eliminating all thoughts and feelings until you become just an observer, and nothing more. My theory is that by breaking the repeating cycle of TPN-to-DMN and back, you allow your brain to connect other hubs. Quiescing also drops the neural activity in the prefrontal cortex (PFC) (to allow for mystical experiences) while allowing you to retain a connection to the medial prefrontal cortex

(mPFC) (to retain conscious awareness).

D.V. Nobles talks about preventing the train of thought altogether. [84] He writes about reducing your thoughts from a "disjointed thought pattern." You cut off all thoughts as soon as they arise, and do your best to prevent new thoughts from entering. Eckhart Tolle might call it "Being" instead of "Doing." [85]

Ordinarily, your mind—or conscious awareness—is like a balloon, but filled with thoughts and feelings instead of air. Trying to achieve an OBE is like trying to get that balloon to the other side of a huge impenetrable brick wall missing one brick: The only way to get to the other side is to deflate the balloon (reduce the number of thoughts and feelings) so it can fit through the hole. At the same time, it's also important not to let your mind wander (lose focus), or you'll simply hit the wall and not go through the hole. In other words, you'll fall asleep. Here are two techniques I often use to clear and focus or quiesce my mind into the proper state:

**"A sound is about to play" technique**

This is the primary mind-focusing technique I teach in OBE classes. The idea is to pretend that an important sound is about to play, and listen for it intently. For example, if there is a flash of lightning, you might expect to hear the rumble of thunder a few seconds later. Just wait for it.

Sometimes in my classes, I dramatically turn on a sound system (like a boom box, PA system / Tannoy, etc.), point to the music app on my phone and say, "I'm about to play a sound for you, so close your eyes and listen." But then I don't play anything. I just let them sit there for about a minute until they get

suspicious and open their eyes. The point is: When you listen intently, you tend to focus your mind and shut out most of the stray thoughts. So just pretend to listen for a sound, with no expectations. That's non-goal-directed focus.

**"Thick line-to-dot" (or "television turn off") technique**

Lately, I've been using a new technique to focus my mind. I call it the "thick line to dot technique." I also call this the "television turn off" technique because it reminds me of what it looks like when you turn off an antique television.

Here's what you do: focus your mind entirely to visualize a thick white line on a black background. It doesn't matter if the line is vertical or horizontal. The line is maybe a foot and a half (half meter) long, and an inch (2cm) wide. (Note that this is a two-dimensional object because it has length and width). The line is just sitting out in front of you a couple of yards/meters. Hold that visualization stable for about 20 seconds. Next, pretend the line narrows and becomes very thin. Hold that visualization stable for about 20 seconds as well. Pretend the line shrinks in length until it is only a single dot or pixel. Hold that visualization stable for another 20 seconds. Then pretend the dot slowly shrinks into nothingness and finally disappears until it's absolutely nothing, so you're left with a blank visualization: you're staring into nothingness.

**Moving through the wall without trying**

There's one more important key to this puzzle. At this point, you might be asking yourself, "How am I supposed to get my balloon of awareness through the hole in the brick wall if my mind is completely quiesced and not goal-directed?" That's where

your subconscious enters into the equation. What should happen is that your awareness should shrink to a tiny size, and the affirmed gentle rocking or sloshing you did earlier should give you enough momentum to leave the body. What usually happens to me is that as my mind shrinks, the rocking increases automatically until I'm in propelled into the out-of-body state.

Many times if you perform one of these mind focusing techniques, it's enough to get you out-of-body. If not, use your single-minded focus to perform one of the following OBE exit techniques. As I said before, you should evaluate them all and pick one before each attempt.

[83] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, pg. 221.

[84] Journey Into the Unknown , D.V. Nobles, self published, 2015, pg. 63.

[85] The Power of Now , Eckhart Tolle, New World Library / Namaste Publishing, 1999, pg. 13.

# Chapter 18. The Cloud or I Am Elsewhere Technique

(Visualization approach)

Let's start off with a technique suggested by Graham Nicholls called the "Cloud Technique" [86] and a few other authors. It's for people who are good at visualization. It's all it takes to shock many people into a new story of experience and initiate an OBE.

First follow the preparation steps in chapters 15 (mental preparation), 16 (physical preparation), and 17 (focusing your mind), then imagine that you're not in bed, but floating or lying on a bed of clouds. Pretend you're weightless and completely at peace. Imagine you see puffy white clouds all around you and clear blue sky above. Feel the wind blowing around you and the sun shining on your body. Convince yourself as much as possible you're no longer in bed, but in the clouds.

I also like to think of this as the "I am elsewhere" technique, because you don't need to visualize yourself in a cloud. You could just as easily visualize another environment, like floating gently in the middle of an ocean or lake, high atop a mountain, in a meadow of green grass, or even on an alien world. You can also pick a specific place, which leads us to the next technique.

[86] Navigating the Out-of-Body Experience , Graham Nicholls, Llewellyn Publications, 2012, pg. 195 – 196.

# Chapter 19. The Target Technique

(Visualization approach)

This direct OBE technique is very old. After you've done the prep work from chapters 15 through 17, you use your ingrained memory to visualize or recall a very familiar place (or object). The technique is most effective if you use your visual memory to recall details of the place.

In my opinion, William Buhlman's book has the best instructions on how to do it. [87] He suggests you use the front door of your residence because it's something you see everyday, often several times a day. Imagine you are standing at your front door. Use your memory to visualize the door in as much detail as possible. See its shape and color. Imagine looking down at the doorknob. Imagine as many details as you can. You can even imagine that you reach out with your hand, feel the texture and coldness, turn the doorknob, open the door, and walk inside.

One of the earliest accounts of this technique was from Ophiel, a pen name for occultist Edward C. Peach. [88] In his "Little System" he suggests you first choose a route for your astral body to travel, then walk through it physically several times, memorizing the route. Choose at least six different features along the route as you walk. Pause at each of these features and memorize the scene.

Later, during the actual OBE attempt, use your memory of the walk-through to enhance your imagination as you walk through the same route in your mind, pausing at the same places. At each of the features, try to feel like you are actually at the location.

For example, select a route that starts at your front door and leads you into your home. First, rehearse the trip

physically. Examine the door (feature 1) carefully (in real life), then open it and step inside. Pause at the entryway and look down at the collection of shoes by the door (feature 2). Then proceed down the hallway, stopping at four more features of your residence. Next, lie down, close your eyes, relax your body and focus your mind into the proper state. Then use your imagination to replay the entire scene in your mind, carefully pausing at each of the six features.

It doesn't need to be a door. Any well-known location or object will work, as long as you're intimately familiar with it. Michael Raduga suggests you use your bathroom mirror. He says people have had a lot of success using the mirror, so it's an ideal location. [89]

Keith Harary and Pamela Weintraub suggest staying at a hotel or motel and when you wake up, try to imagine you're back home in your own bed. [90] I've done this, and it works.

Another early book by Robert ("Bob") Moser has a similar technique. He suggested you use your imagination to create an imaginary door with intricate details, including occult symbols, inlay, carvings, a fancy key, and so forth, to make it symbolic and unique to you, then pass through it. [91]

Salvatore Caesar Scordato suggests you imagine flying down an imaginary tunnel. [92] Try to intensely visualize every detail of the tunnel as you fly down. He says you should not proceed until you've mastered the ability to perfectly visualize a tunnel in your mind's eye.

J.H. (Herbie) Brennan gives several variations of the target technique. [93] Instead of visualizing a memorized location, he suggests you memorize an object that has special (or religious / occult) meaning or significance to you. For example:

Alchemical symbols: Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Ether (Occult significance)
Tattvic symbols: Akasa, Vayu, Tajas, Apas, Prithivi (Hindu significance)
Mandalas (Yogic significance)
Tarot cards (New Age significance)
Qaballa / Kaballah (Jewish mysticism significance)
I Ching hexagrams (Chinese cultural significance)

With Brennan's variations, you visualize one of these symbols as intensely as you can, and try (more importantly, intend) to get drawn into it.

Again, try to develop a sense of realism, or what psychologists call "absorption." It might help to try to follow a progression like this:

At first, visualize (stare at) the scene.
Stare "into" the object, not just "at" the scene.
Try to convince yourself that you're at the target location, and not at your body's location.

Yvette LeBlanc gives an interesting variation. [94] She suggests you not only visualize a three-dimensional cube, identical on all sides, but imagine yourself moving around it in a circle to view it from other angles, until it "becomes real." This somewhat combines pure visualization with a sense of movement: taking a motion-based approach to the technique. You can also interact with the cube, which is similar to the next technique.

[87] Adventures Beyond the Body , William Buhlman, HarperSanFrancisco, 1996, pg. 177 – 180.

[88] The Art & Practice of Astral Projection , Ophiel, Samuel Weiser, 1974, pg. 1 – 34.

[89] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 60 – 61.

[90] Have an Out-of-Body Experience in 30 Days , Keith Harary and Pamela Weintraub, St. Martin's Press, 1989, pg. 47.

[91] Mental and Astral Projection , Robert ("Bob") Moser, Esoteric Publications, 1974, chapter 5, pg. 49.

[92] You Can Fly , Salvatore Caesar Scordato, Kaleidoscope Books, chapter 8, pg. 101.

[93] Astral Doorways , J.H.Brennan, Samuel Weiser, 1975, chapters 4, 6, 7, and 8.

[94] Astral Travel and Aura Viewing , Yvette LeBlanc, self-published, 2011. pg 107.

# Chapter 20. Simulacrum, Cube and Black Box Techniques

(Visualization approach)

This is a very old OBE technique and popular with many occultists, including Mark Stavish, whose book has an extensive description. [95] Several other non-occultists recommend similar methods, including Graham Nicholls. [96]

The basis for this hinges on an occult belief that when we die, we carry on in an astral body for a while, but without proper reinforcement, the astral body dissolves or melts over the course of a few weeks. The person's personality, individuality, or unique identity then dissi-pates and returns to the Source, or God. They believe the only way to make your unique personality persist in the afterlife is to create a non-physical body. [97] They call this non-physical body a "simulacrum," "light body," "body of light," or a "non-physical vehicle of consciousness."

With this technique you use your imagination and visualization to "build" an external simulacrum. Each time you induce an OBE, reinforce the simulacrum so that it becomes more solid and real on the "astral plane" so your consciousness may use it in the afterlife. Occultists also recommend you perform some kind of ritual to protect the simulacrum and/or affirm that no other entities can use it but you on your next OBE.

Janet Bord, recommends you use a mirror before-hand to memorize your own likeness. [98] Of course, anyone who's looked at their own body from an OBE can tell you it's the reverse image of what you see in a mirror. So maybe a "selfie" would work better. William Buhlman also covers this technique and

describes it quite well. [99]

At any rate, visualize a non-physical copy of your own body floating above you, facing you. Then imagine your conscious awareness is transferred into that simulacrum, so you are looking down at your physical body lying on the bed below. Try as hard as you can to see from the perspective of the simulacrum.

I suggested a similar technique in my first book, in which you visualize a black box, about three inches on a side, rather than a simulacrum, floating in front of you, slightly to the left of center. [100] Hold that visualization for about thirty seconds. Next, visualize a cloud of gray, about the same size, sitting to the right of the box. The cloud has no defined shape, but is taller than it is wide, almost resembling a snowman. Visualize the two figures side by side for another thirty seconds. Next, visualize a thread of light slowly reaching from the black box to the gray blob. It reaches closer and closer until it touches the gray blob, filling it with light. At that point, the vibrations may hit. If they don't, try a different technique.

[95] Between the Gates , Mark Stavish, Red Wheel/Weiser, pg. 138-163.

[96] Navigating the Out-of-Body Experience , Graham Nicholls, Llewellyn Publications, pg. 196.

[97] I don't subscribe to this belief, but believing is seeing, right?

[98] Astral Projection , Janet Bord, Aquarian Press, 1973, pg. 56.

[99] Adventures Beyond the Body , William Buhlman, HarperSanFrancisco, 1996, pg. 180 – 181.

[100] Out of Body Experiences , Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, chapter 13, pg. 116.

# Chapter 21. The Spinning Disc Technique

(Visualization approach)

This technique comes from Richard Craze. [101] The idea is to visualize a disc of any color (blue, green, etc.), that faces you. Spin the disc around in a clockwise circle. Imagine it picks up speed and spins faster and faster until the color fades to white. Let the spinning disk increase in size and speed until it draws you completely out-of-body like a vortex.

It's interesting to note that Craze turns the imaginary disc white as it spins. There's something special about how the brain interprets whiteness. It reminds me of an exercise from Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman that's not meant for OBEs but mystical experiences in general: [102]

> "...All you need is a white sheet of paper. You can place it on your desk, or tape it to the wall, placing your chair in a way that you can comfortably look at it...close your eyes, relax, and bring yourself in the present moment by paying attention to the natural rhythm of your breathing. Do this for several minutes, and then open your eyes and gaze at the paper using your fullest concentration. Explore it and study as many details as you can: the edge, the size, the whiteness of the paper, etc."

It also reminds me of an exercise I sometimes do where I stare past an image on my computer monitor with my eyes open. Usually it's a document with a white background. Somehow I can go into a somewhat deep trance just by doing that, but if I close my eyes, I'm usually knocked out of the trance.

[101] Astral Projection: A Beginner's Guide , Richard Craze, Hodder Headline plc, 1996, pg. 71.

[102] How Enlightenment Changes Your Brain , Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman, Penguin Random House, 2016, pg. 218.

# Chapter 22. The Floating Beach Ball / Sphere Technique

(Visualization approach)

This technique was suggested by author Graham Nicholls. [103] Here you imagine a ball of energy, like a beach ball, floating in front of you, glowing with light and energy. Although he didn't say it, my interpretation was to repeatedly bouncing the ball up into the air, especially if I'm in a sitting position. You can also imagine it expanding and contracting with each breath you take. When it feels right, move the beach ball directly above your head, not unlike Robert Monroe's "Lines of Force" technique in chapter 4. Nicholls recommends not only floating balls of energy, but also visualizing geometric shapes: triangles, pyramids, and others. That's not too different from the "target techniques" or even the swaying "cube" visualization in my first book. [104]

On a possibly related note: I sometimes do a meditation where I visualize my entire body surrounded by a bubble of loving energy, rather than it being in front of me. I slowly expand the bubble to include the entire room, then the entire house, then my neighbors' houses, the entire neighborhood, the entire city, etc. I keep expanding the bubble of love until it encompasses the entire world, solar system, galaxy, and finally, universe.

If you don't get any results, try the next technique.

[103] Navigating the Out of Body Experience , Graham Nicholls, Llewellyn, 2012, pg. 131.

[104] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, chapter 24.

# Chapter 23. The Pineal Doorway Technique

(Visualization approach)

This exit technique was invented by occultist Oliver Fox [105] , a pseudonym for Hugh Callaway. Fox's book was one of the earliest books written about astral projection, and it was based on a series of articles he wrote for the Occult Review in 1920. Fox documented three ways to induce an OBE, including this technique, the pineal doorway. (The other two were "Dream of Knowledge" aka through lucid dreams, and the "instantaneous projection" method which is pretty much the Target Technique.)

In this technique, you just vividly imagine your entire awareness is concentrated in the pineal gland. [106] He found that if he did that long enough, his entire awareness would suddenly whoosh up and seemingly go through some kind of doorway, after which he had incredible clarity of consciousness. But this method came at a cost. He wrote:

> "Until one has become accustomed to it, the actual process of passing through the 'Door' in the pineal gland produces an effect of extreme mental confusion and a terrible fear..." (pg. 87)

Fox also reported that this technique stopped working for him after a number of years, and he never figured out why. So he had to resort to other techniques.

If you have a hard time with visualization techniques, you can either work to improve your visualiza-tion skills, or try one of the motion-based techniques below.

[105] Astral Projection: A Record of Out-of-the-Body Experiences, Oliver Fox, Citadel Press, 1979 edition, pg. 72.

[106] The pineal gland is a tiny gland in the center of the brain, which produces melatonin, a brain hormone related to sleep. It is the size of a pea, and shaped like a pine cone. More on that in chapter 69.

# Chapter 24. Rocking and Swaying Techniques

(Motion-based approach)

Motion-based techniques aren't common in OBE literature, [107] but I've always found them to be the most effective for me. Over the years, I've used many motion-based techniques that involve imaginary rocking. I almost always imagine myself rocking or swaying even before I begin any of the exit techniques, as I explained in chapter 17. Here are several motion-based techniques to try:

Imagine your whole body is rocking forward and backward.
Imagine your whole body is rocking side-to-side.
Imagine your head is rocking or nodding.
Imagine you're sitting in a rocking chair, rocking back and forth.
Imagine you're standing on the bow of a ship that's being rocked up and down in huge ocean waves.
Imagine you are in a playground, sitting in a swing set, playfully swinging back and forth.
Imagine you're on a teeter-totter being joyfully lifted up and down by a friend.

All of these variations are very effective for me. D. Scott Rogo gives a similar variation in which you imagine yourself "being carried along on a wave." [108]

[107] Some of the target techniques from chapter 19 may be considered motion-based, especially if you imagine yourself passing through the doorway or symbol.

[108] Leaving the Body , D. Scott Rogo, Prentice-Hall Inc., pg. 53.

# Chapter 25. The Yoyo Technique

(Motion-based approach)

I suggested this technique in my first book. [109]

After doing the usual prep work, imagine there is a yoyo (not so much a real yoyo, but a ball of non-physical energy (chi, qi, prana, whatever you want to call it), attached to your third eye, the area between your eyes. Imagine the energy-yoyo is weightless, so it doesn't fall with gravity. A real yoyo needs a pushing and pulling action from your hand, but this imaginary yoyo needs pushing and pulling from your third eye. With your imagination, push the yoyo down to the end of its string then pull it back to your third eye. As you work with the yoyo, try to work your way into a single-minded, focused state of mind.

With your mind, push and pull the yoyo about fifty times. Try to push it out a little further each time , but don't try to count the number of pushes, because that may unfocus your mind .

If that doesn't work, move on to the next motion-based technique.

[109] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, chapter 9.

# Chapter 26. The Falling In A Well and Cone Techniques

(Motion-based approach)

I suggested this technique in my first book as well. [110]

Visualize you are looking down a very deep well, then pretend you fall in, head first. As you fall, watch the bottom of the well getting closer. Imagine the sensation of falling as real as possible. Feel the gravity pull you toward the bottom. Get caught up in the feeling. This isn't much different from Salvatore Scordato's tunnel visualization, but you feed the TPJ an imaginary circumstance of gravity.

A similar technique, but working on the opposite principle, was suggested by D. Scott Rogo:

> "Imagine that you are in a tube gradually filling with water. See yourself as a point of light and try to find a tiny hole in the side of the tube from which to escape. Push yourself through it." [111]

In another, he suggests you "Imagine yourself inside a cone and passing through it. Try to pop out through the top of the cone after squeezing yourself in." Here you feed the TPJ an imaginary sense of pressure, as you're squeezed into the cone, and back out.

If that doesn't work, move on to the next motion-based technique.

[110] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, chapter 11.

[111] Leaving the Body , D. Scott Rogo, Prentice-Hall, 1983, pg. 53.

# Chapter 27. The Feet Zoom Technique

(Motion-based approach)

This is relatively new technique I developed in the past few years. It's founded on the simple fact that whenever you see your feet, especially your shoes, you're almost always in an upright position, looking down. If you're like me, you really never look at your shoes unless you're standing or walking. Well, maybe on rare occasions, but that's the exception, not the rule. What you do is:

Stand up (physically) and stare at your feet with your shoes on for a while to get a good visual memory from that point of view. Then take the shoes off.
Lie down and relax completely, and all those other suggestions from chapters 15 through 17.
Pretend you're staring at your shoe-clad feet again. Remember and visualize it as best you can.
Pretend that you zoom them in and out repeatedly, as if you get closer to them, then farther.
Alter your inner dialogue to match this information. Think to yourself, "I am now standing upright, moving toward my feet, then back."
Repeat this over and over.

With too little physical sense data to base its judgment on, your TPJ will eventually start to interpret this as reality: "I'm not lying down. I must be standing up."

Once your TPJ has been jarred out of its normal "spacial location" and into a different paradigm (story of experience), you'll be in an out-of-body experience and free to roam, at least as long as you're able to maintain it. If that doesn't

work, move on to the next motion-based technique.

# Chapter 28. The Swinging Arms Technique

(Motion-based approach)

I developed this technique in the last few years too. In this technique, imagine swinging both your astral arms in large swooping motions (while your physical arms remain immobile at your sides.) This motion is similar to what a cross-country skier does with his or her poles. Like the previous technique, try to convince yourself, "These are my real arms" and develop that sense of realism.

You can swing your imaginary arms in tandem, which would cause your body to rock forward and backward, or in opposition, which could cause your body to twist from side-to-side.

If you have a hard time imagining your body moving forward and backward, pretend someone (like an astral helper or guardian angel) is hovering above you, and they repeatedly push your left shoulder (or, if it's easier, elbow) down, then your right shoulder (or elbow) down, then repeat that motion so you get a sense of being rocked from side-to-side by someone pressing on your arms.

Another variation I sometimes use is the "Bicycle Wheeling" technique. You imagine you're using your arms and hands to turn a wheel, like pedaling a bicycle, but with your hands.

Robert Bruce documented two similar techniques. In his "Steam Engine Exercise" you circle your arms and hands around each other like "playing at being a steam engine." [112] In the "Big Wheel Method" you use your imagination to bend yourself around a rotating bicycle wheel big enough to fill the entire room. If you don't get results, move on to the next motion-based

technique.

[112] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 268.

# Chapter 29. Ab Crunch, Tai Chi and Exercise Techniques

(Motion-based approach)

This technique is not unlike the previous two. Instead of swinging your arms, pretend you're at the gym doing physical exercise. I recommend abdominal crunches because they involve so many body parts. You can also imagine pull-ups, sit-ups, the butterfly, or any other physical exercise.

To take this technique to the next level, visualize doing Tai Chi, Qi Gong, or Hatha Yoga in slow motion (even if you have no training), then after several minutes, stop and blank your mind. Exercises with slow careful movements build up neural activity in the brain's prefrontal cortex (PFC), and relaxation drops it down, as we talked about in chapter 3. If it doesn't work to imagine Tai Chi, try performing actual Tai Chi movements (physically) for ten to fifteen minutes, then lie down and blank your mind for an OBE.

Since these variations involve imaginary exercise, be very careful not to let physical tension creep in. Keep your body relaxed and your mind as passive as possible.

The most important thing is to use your imagina-tion as vividly as possible. Become completely absorbed into your imagination. If that doesn't work, move on to the next motion-based technique.

# Chapter 30. The Almost Move Technique

(Motion-based approach)

This is another technique I developed several years ago. It's not much different from the previous. First, choose a body part like your arms, legs, or hands, then imagine moving them back and forth, but only an infinitesimal amount.

Here's where things get tricky and hard to explain. Remember that 9-year-old girl in chapter 2 who imagined a roller coaster? She said to "try to move, but don't really move." You want to come as close as you can to moving the chosen body parts without actually moving them. You want to physically move your arms, legs, or hands, but only the tiniest amount you can possibly imagine. How tiny? You don't want to move your body a thousandth or even a millionth of an inch (or millimeter); that's too much. In fact, the amount you want to move is exactly zero inches (zero millimeters).

Every time you move your arms, legs or hands this way, use your intent: Intend that your astral body moves rather than the physical, and imagine that it's physically moving. Repeat this over and over: In your imagination, move your arms, legs, or hands zero inches, with the intent of moving your astral body. In other words, intend to physically move, without any physical movement.

A similar procedure was later suggested by D.V. Nobles in a technique called "Waking the non-physical body." [113] Nobles says to "Imagine moving your fingers, but don't physically move them. Continue doing this until it actually feels as if they are moving." Then repeat for other limbs.

This is a powerful technique. If it doesn't work, try a

different motion-based technique.

[113] Journey Into the Unknown , D.V. Nobles, self published, 2015, pg. 67.

# Chapter 31. The Flash or Running Technique

(Motion-based approach)

In this technique, pretend to run as fast as you can, or even faster than you can. Remember to keep your body completely relaxed. Preston Dennett calls this technique "The Flash." He says to pretend to run at super-human speeds, like the super-hero "The Flash." [114]

L. Jordan carries this a bit further, suggesting you imagine you're at the front car of a train, running as fast as you can toward the back, while the train speeds forward as fast as possible. He calls his two variations the "Running Technique" and the "Train Technique." [115]

The key to this technique is to pretend to run so fast that your brain's TPJ doesn't have a chance to process the information it's receiving, and therefore is forced to accept your imaginary situation as valid.

If it doesn't work, try the next motion-based technique.

[114] Out-of-body Exploring , Preston Dennett, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2004, pg. 164.

[115] Astral Projection Mastery , L. Jordan, self published, 2015, pg. 62.

# Chapter 32. Rolling, Spinning, and Tornado Technique

(Motion-based approach)

As far as I can tell, the "roll out" technique was invented by Robert Monroe. [116] Here you imagine you're rolling or spinning inside your physical body, like a log rolling down a hill.

An extension to "rolling" comes once again from L. Jordan who says to imagine you're caught up in a tornado that turns you around in circles uncontrollably. [117] The goal is to confuse your TPJ with false information so extreme that it's forced to give up its tight grip on the physical senses.

Long before these techniques were invented, the Sufi (Mevlevi) order of Islam (aka "Whirling Dervishes") invented a spinning dance (done physically) to induce ecstatic states, and they still do it today. I believe their dance exhausts the TPJ, making it easier to achieve mystical states.

Yvette LeBlanc also suggests physically spinning or twirling up to 20 times (and with common sense) to "loosen your physical attachment." [118]

Although he didn't call out the Sufis, D. Scott Rogo suggested imagining you're whirling about. With that thought in mind, you can also try to achieve "virtual dizziness" rather than physical dizziness. [119] Another exercise he suggests is to "Concentrate on the image of a whirlpool. Imagine yourself swirling through the vortex and out the body. You should imagine yourself becoming a single point and then expanding as you emerge. [120]

If motion-based techniques don't work, proceed to the

tactile imagination techniques.

[116] Journeys Out of the Body , Robert Monroe, Doubleday, 1977 edition, pg. 220.

[117] Astral Projection Mastery , L. Jordan, self published, 2015, pg. 63.

[118] Astral Travel & Aura Viewing , Yvette LeBlanc, 2011, pg. 53.

[119] Leaving the Body , D. Scott Rogo, pg. 53.

[120] ___, pg. 53.

# Chapter 33. The Rope Technique

(Tactile imagination approach)

Robert Bruce developed the first tactile imagination technique, his famous "rope" technique, when a man who had been blind since birth asked him for a procedure that did not involve visualization. [121]

As with all direct OBE techniques, first do the prep work described in chapters 15 through 17. Then, instead of using visual memory or visual imagination, you use tactile imagination, the imagined sense of touch rather than imaginary sight.

Close your eyes and pretend there's a securely fastened rope hanging down from the ceiling. Imagine you reach out and grab it with both hands, then try to pull yourself up along the rope. Don't try to "see" the imaginary rope. Just imagine what it would feel like in your hands. Feel its thickness. Feel its rough, course texture. Feel the resistance of your body as you pull yourself up.

Bruce also gives several variations: [122]

One-handed rope, where you hold on with one hand, but pull up only with your dominant hand.
Chasm-crossing rope, where you hang from a rope that spans a chasm, and you cross it hand-over-hand rather than pulling up.
Hanging rope, where you just hang onto the rope and imagine the whole thing is lifted, as if from a helicopter.
Water ski rope, where you imagine holding onto a tow rope while water skiing.
Rope cargo net, where you imagine a big grid of ropes like the ones used in military training exercises. No matter where you grab, your hands automatically reach another section of rope.

Author L. Jordan suggests a variant: In your imagination, climb up a ladder and feel its cold rungs in your hands as you ascend. [123]

D. Scott Rogo suggested two more motion-based variations of this technique. The first is to "Imagine yourself clinging to a coil of rope and being drawn out of the body by it." The second is to "Imagine yourself walking up a flight of stairs. At the top of the flight take hold of an imaginary rope and jump off. Fill your lungs with air at the same time." [124]

If none of the rope techniques work for you, try the next tactile imagination technique.

[121] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 254.

[122] ___, pg. 266 – 267.

[123] Astral Projection Mastery , L. Jordan, self published, 2015, pg. 50.

[124] Leaving the Body , D. Scott Rogo, pg. 55.

# Chapter 34. The Washing Hands Technique

(Tactile imagination approach)

Robert Bruce developed another tactile imagination technique that's powerful, but largely overlooked and undervalued in the OBE literature. In this technique, you imagine that you're washing your hands; rubbing your hands together, focusing on the imaginary sensation of touch of the water and friction of both hands. [125]

Michael Raduga also extolled the virtues of this technique. Although he calls it the "Technique of Visualizing the Hands" he says the OBEr "tries to feel that he is rubbing his hands together as if to warm them." [126] He also suggests rubbing the palms of your hands together. Elsewhere he uses a similar concept, "palpation" (touching everything in sight) as a technique for maintaining or "deepening" an OBE once you're in it, especially if the OBE starts to lose stability. [127]

I sometimes use a similar technique in which I use my imagination to touch and explore the surface and edges of a small quartz crystal octahedron I own.

The advantage of focusing on your hands is that, due to the large number of nerves in the hands, a disproportionately large area of your sensory cortex is devoted your hands, so a larger amount of sense data is fed into the TPJ.

If this doesn't work for you, try the next tactile imagination technique.

[125] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 267 – 268.

[126] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 246.

[127] ___, pg. 162 – 163.

# Chapter 35. The Feel for Buzzing Technique

(Tactile imagination approach)

I gave this exit technique in my first book. [128] The idea here is to perform the preparation steps given in chapter 15 through 17, then imagine a disembodied finger reaches out and touches your third eye, the area between your eyebrows, or at the bridge of your nose. Imagine you feel a buzzing, electrical sensation originating at the point of touch. Then imagine the buzzing sensation gets stronger and stronger until it envelopes your entire head. Repeat these steps as many times as it takes while drifting down into sleep.

If this doesn't work for you, try the next tactile imagination technique.

[128] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, chapter 22.

# Chapter 36. Heavy / Light Technique

(Tactile imagination approach)

This technique comes from author Richard Craze. [129] As usual, you do the prep work from chapters 15 through 17. Once your body is completely relaxed, imagine with every fiber of your being that you are becoming enormously heavy. Pretend you're so heavy, you're crushing the bed or chair beneath you. Feel every part of your body becomes heavier than you've ever been. Then abruptly switch from being enormously heavy to being light as a feather. Imagine you're so light that you might just float away. Once that's accomplished, imagine you're heavy again. Keep alternating between heavy and light until you actually do float away, in an OBE.

D. Scott Rogo suggests a variation that focuses only on the "light" side; the feeling of buoyancy: "Imagine yourself as a soap bubble floating in space." [130]

[129] Astral Projection: A Beginner's Guide , Richard Craze, Hodder Headline plc, 1996, pg. 75.

[130] Leaving the Body , D. Scott Rogo, pg. 55.

# Chapter 37. Brain Crush and Straining the Brain Techniques

(Tactile imagination approach)

I don't remember where I first read about the "Brain Crush" technique. In this technique you imagine your head and/or brain are being crushed or put under pressure. In chapter 5, I mentioned that OBEs might be related to migraines, so this technique might play off that concept.

Author Michael Raduga described a similar technique he called "Straining the brain." [131] In his words, the person trying to achieve the OBE:

> "...tries to strain his brain either spasmodically or continually, as if it were a muscle. This brings a feeling of real strain inside the cranium, in addition to pressure, noise, and vibrations."

When performing these techniques, it's very easy for muscle tension to creep in unnoticed. So make sure your body stays relaxed the whole time. If you start to tense up, just relax your body completely again, refocus your mind, and start over.

If none of the tactile techniques work, try one of the following auditory exit techniques.

[131] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 243.

# Chapter 38. The High Pitch Whine Technique

(Auditory imagination approach)

I gave this technique in my first book. [132] It's similar to the "feel for buzzing" technique of chapter 35, but instead of trying to "feel" imaginary buzzing with tactile imagina-tion, you try to "hear" an imaginary high pitched whine using auditory imagination.

During your OBE practice sessions, you may notice a high-pitched whining noise in your head. We all hear this high-pitched sound constantly, but normally it's drowned out by constant distractions and sounds all around us. Most people don't notice it, but some people have a disorder called tinnitus, which causes the sound to be unusually loud and distracting.

After doing the same chapter 15 through 17 prep work, listen for the high-pitched whining sound in your head. Once you find it, use your imagination to increase the pitch and volume. Increase the pitch until the sound is almost out of the range of your hearing. This can cause the vibrations to sweep in and free you from your body.

If that doesn't work, try the next auditory imagina-tion technique.

[132] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, chapter 23.

# Chapter 39. The Song Replay Technique

(Auditory imagination approach)

I once had a roommate named John ("JH" in my first book). He couldn't visualize well, so instead of using imaginary sight, he used imaginary sound.

John's technique is basically to do the same preparation as before, then try to imagine a song is playing from beginning to end. It doesn't matter what song, but it should be a song you know very well, every note, beat, lyric and nuance. For example, try "Stairway to Heaven" by Led Zeppelin. It might be better to pick a song that you associate (consciously or subconsciously) with OBEs, so maybe "Kashmir" is a better choice. Just pick any song, then play it back in your head with as much detail as you can muster.

Some people listen to (real, not imagined) binaural beats, hemi-sync [133], or Infraliminal [134] tracks or other mind-bending tracks to elicit altered states (more about that in chapter 65). It might be more effective to recall, with as much detail as you can, some of these tracks. I'm particularly fond of Jurgen Ziewe's track "The Far Countries—Multidimensional Man."

[133] Hemi-Sync is a patented sound technology created by the Monroe Institute for inducing altered states.

[134] Infraliminal sound technology is a product of OBE author Graham Nicholls.

# Chapter 40. Imaginary Shouting for OBE

(Auditory imagination approach)

Here's another auditory technique someone posted to one of the astral projection Facebook groups a long time ago: After relaxing and preparing your mind as described earlier, you imagine you're standing on a cliff edge overlooking a vast valley, then mentally shout louder and louder an OBE command or affirmation like "Out-of-body now!"

Try to mentally hear the sound reverberate and echo across the entire valley and fill the valley with the sound of your silent command. Keep repeating this over and over until you feel the vibrations.

While this is somewhat similar to the "Sleep Directive" technique given in chapter 57, they're fundamentally different. This technique uses auditory imagination whereas the other is a command or directive to the subconscious.

# Chapter 41. Mantras for OBE

(Auditory imagination approach)

For thousands of years, people following the Yogic traditions of India have induced transcendent states of consciousness by using their imagination to repeat sounds called mantras. A mantra is a set of sounds, words, or phrases you silently (or not so silently) repeat while you go into a trance. It's common to use phrases in Hindi, or even just the universal sound "Aum." They say the language doesn't matter because the Universe responds to the intent of the meditation. You don't need to do yoga for this. Christians do the same thing today with the rosary and other prayers.

Only a few authors suggest mantras to induce OBEs, but one of them is Nick Dutch. [135] He suggests you use words in your native language that have personal meaning. He suggests something that gives you a feeling of buoyancy, like the lighter-than-air element helium: you inwardly chant "He Li Um." You can also use words that evoke personal meaning in your life, like "Kundalini" (chant "Kun Da Li Ni.") It doesn't even need to be words. You can also use simple sounds like "Fe, Fi, Fo, Fu." It's just a way to focus your mind. As with affirmations, avoid mantras with negative connotations.

The Eckankar group uses the simple sound "Hu" (pronounced like the name Hugh) as a mantra to induce "soul travel."

The OBE author who probably gives the most extensive collection of OBE mantras is Kensho. [136] He suggests mantras such as "Faraon," "Larass," "Ehipto," "Rusty," and "re re re re re re." He also suggests a similar technique where you

imagine a “cricket sound” inside your head repeating over and over, repeating like a mantra.

I sometimes meditate while listening to mantra tracks by Hein Brat, especially his renditions of Gayatri Mantra and Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, which I learned about in William Buhlman’s out-of-body intensive class at the Monroe Institute. So sometimes I repeat the same Hindi phrases mentally when I try for an OBE.

If you don’t get results with visualizations, tactile imagination, or imaginary sounds, try combining them in one of the hybrid techniques below.

[135] Astral Projection and Sceptical Occultism , Nick Dutch, WheelMan Press, 2012, pg. 106-111

[136] Out of Body Experiences, Kensho, Developed Life Books, 2015, pgs. 34 – 43.

# Chapter 42. The Heartbeat Technique

(Hybrid visualization-sound-touch approach)

The previous chapters suggested imaginary senses of sight, touch, and sound to trick the brain's TPJ into a new story of experience to get you out-of-body. The "heartbeat" technique takes a different approach by combining multiple senses. The technique can be found in a few OBE books. For example, V.M. Beelzebub (a pseudonym for Mark Pritchard) has one of the most in-depth descriptions of it. [137]

Again, you start out with the same prep work given in chapter 15 through 17. Then you listen intently to the sound of your own heartbeat. Try to feel the thump of your heart (sense of touch) and hear it beating at the same time (sense of sound). You can also pretend that a white light is flashing at the same rate, creating a kind of strobe effect. That gets your sense of sight involved as well.

[137] Experiencing Astral Travel: An 8 Week Course , V.M. Beelzebub, Absolute Publishing, 2003, pgs. 33 – 37.

# Chapter 43. The Candle Flame Technique

(Hybrid visualization-sound-touch approach)

This technique comes from Darryl Berry [138] and gives your TPJ a triple-whammy. I'm taking a bit of liberty with Berry's original idea to expound on it a bit.

The idea is to pretend your body is engulfed in the flame of a giant ritual candle. Imagine that your non-physical body is like the candle's wick. Imagine that the flame surrounds your entire body, not in a harmful way, but in a sacred way. Because heat rises, candles create an upward draft, so try to imagine that your astral body is being pulled upward by a draft.

Try to both see and feel the sacred fire around you. Try to imagine hearing the gentle purr of the flame as it burns and consumes oxygen. Try to feel the heat of it lovingly embracing you.

Berry also suggests a variation: imagine a flame is burning at the site of your "third eye," between the eyebrows.

[138] Travel Far , Darryl E. Berry Jr, Next Density Publishing, pg. 138.

# Chapter 44. The Orange Peel Technique

(Hybrid five senses approach)

This technique comes from author Richard Craze. [139] It relies even more on creating false data from all five senses to overwhelm the TPJ.

The idea here is to imagine you're holding an orange (or any pungent fruit). Imagine digging your fingers into its skin and peeling it back. You see its color. You feel its texture. You feel the resistance of the thick skin against your fingernails and the pressure on your fingertips. You see the juice squirt out. You smell the fruity fragrance fill the room as it does. You imagine its juicy wetness on your skin. You can even imagine that you break off a section, put it into your mouth, and taste it.

If the hybrid imagination techniques don't work for you, it's time to try my favorite approach: using your body's natural hypnagogic hallucinations.

[139] Astral Projection: A Beginner's Guide , Richard Craze, Hodder Headline plc, 1996, pg. 70.

# Chapter 45. The Swinging Hypnagogic Image Technique

(hypnagogic image manipulation approach)

People often ask what OBE technique I use. I've been at this a long time, so I've tried almost all of them, but I keep coming back to the technique that's given me the most success. I described it in my first book [140] , and made some improvements in my second book. [141] When you first read through the technique it may seem more complex than the others. It's not really that complicated, but for me it's very effective.

First, do the same prep work described in chapter 15 through 17 as before. Next, work your way down to the hypnagogic state with your mind completely passive and receptive to whatever happens. You need to go pretty deep toward the edge of sleep for this one, until you start to see and hear hypnagogic hallucinations.

Don't try to visualize anything. Don't even use your imagination. Just watch and wait for a natural hypnagogic image to appear in front of your visual field. Sometimes you may hear sounds or voices rather than see images. Just ignore the sounds and wait for an image to appear.

I said it before in chapter 12, but I cannot stress this enough: do **not** play "what if" with a hypnagogic image because that's the surest way to get sucked down to the depths of unconsciousness and fall asleep. Treat them as your playthings, but don't become interested in them.

As images appear in front of you, grab them one by one and manipulate them. I don't mean to grab them physically or with astral hands. I mean take control of them, and use acts of will

to move them.

As they float across your visual field, assume ownership of them and try to move, turn, and spin them. Many hypnagogic images are not suitable for manipulation. For example, yesterday (as I write this) I saw a hypnagogic image from inside a theater, complete with a stage and several hundred people sitting in the audience. It's not so easy to take control of that and turn it (but it never hurts to try). In cases like that, just ignore it. Let it float away or dissolve and wait for the next image to appear.

It doesn't matter what the image is. Any reasonably sized object will do: chairs, lamps, cutlery, cats, cars, airplanes, or whatever else appears.

The hypnagogic images will often disintegrate—poof, go up in smoke—as soon as you grab them, then you have to wait for another to appear. Another object ought to appear within a second or two, so grab the next one and do the same thing: take ownership of it (think to yourself, "that's mine"), take control of it, and spin it. You should spin it because moving objects are more stable than stationary objects. In a way, it's like your subconscious is a factory that keeps producing new images and parading them in front of you, trying to draw or suck you in. Just keep taking ownership of each one as it appears, and spin it around. Make it your plaything until it dissolves.

Eventually, the images will acquire more cohesion and stick around a bit longer before they dissolve. Once you manage to grab a stable image that doesn't dissolve, swing it back and forth (as it continues to spin), away from you, then toward you. Do this repeatedly.

Next, imagine a kind of gravity develops between you and the object. The closer it gets, the more it pulls on you. The farther away, the less it pulls on you.

Remain passive and watch the object sway away from

you, then toward you, like a pendulum. When the object gets close, attach your awareness to it (in other words, imagine you are stuck to it) with your mind and let its momentum pull you away from the body. At that point you may feel a "zap" and find yourself separated from your body, lying still within it (i.e. the swaying motion may stop), but with the vibrations buzzing in the background.

[140] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, chapter 24.

[141] Lessons Out of the Body , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2001, chapter 29.

# Chapter 46. Problem Solving for the Direct Strategy

When beginners try direct OBE techniques they often make the same mistakes, due to inexperience. This chapter explains some of the most common mistakes and how to overcome them.

Suppose your body is completely relaxed and you're lying face up in the supine position. [142] Your mind is tightly focused and you try one of the direct exit techniques from the preceding chapters, but something goes wrong.

**Problem 1 - Falling asleep**

I've heard this countless times: "Every time I try to get out, I fall asleep." If you fall asleep during OBE practice, modify your technique. Tweak these variables:

- Practice in the morning when you're fully rested (like on the weekends).
- If you still fall asleep, you may be starting too early. Try later.
- Try staying awake for ten minutes before trying again.
- Drink a caffeinated drink like coffee or an energy drink right before you try. I'll talk more about caffeine in chapter 67.
- Practice away from your bed (like a guest bed). We're often too preconditioned to fall asleep in our own beds.
- Try the exit technique sitting up in a recliner or comfortable chair instead of a bed. Some people are too preconditioned to fall asleep when their body is horizontal.
- Try lying on your back. Most people are preconditioned to fall asleep on their side.
- Practice during a mid-day nap rather than morning or night.
- Experiment with how much light is in the room when you practice.

**Problem 2 - Staring straight ahead but nothing happens**

Whenever I hear this, I ask "If you try to move, does your physical body move?" If the answer is yes (and it often is), you're probably too afraid of falling asleep during your attempt, so you remain too alert, conscious, and vigilant. You need to get closer to sleep.

With OBEs, there is a very delicate balance between "too awake" and "too asleep." I use the analogy of walking a tightrope [143]: you've got to narrow your focus down to a tiny thread of awareness, but still not lose consciousness. Don't be afraid of falling asleep; if you do, just pick up the pieces and try again next time. If you get too close to sleep and start to fall, you may also catch it and bring your awareness back to full lucidity, but be careful not to move your body. I've fallen off that "tightrope" (i.e. gotten too close and fallen asleep) at least a hundred times for every successful OBE. So be persistent, keep trying, and never give up.

If the answer is no and your body doesn't move, you may already be in sleep paralysis and not realize it. OBEs are that realistic. Michael Raduga is the only author I know who rightly points this out. [144] In that case, the proper thing to do is to try to move away from the body: stand up, sit up, or roll over, just like you would if it was your physical body, just like when you're in the ASP state as I described in chapter 7.

During OBE practice, if you start to see images and hear strange voices, that's good: Those are the hypnagogic hallucinations I talked about in chapters 12 and 45. They're an important milestone on the path to OBE. If you never see or hear those hallucinations, you're probably not "deep" enough and should allow yourself to drift a bit closer to sleep little by little.

**Problem 3 - You can't breathe because your throat closes when you relax**

This happens to me from time to time. There are two solutions. The best solution is to tilt your head back a bit. Bunch up your pillow so more of it is beneath your neck, which makes your head tilt back a little. That naturally opens your throat so your can breathe better. Paramedics similarly tilt the head back to open the airway when giving mouth-to-mouth for CPR.

The second solution is to lie on your side rather than your back. It's not ideal because most people are so conditioned to fall asleep in that position, but you may not have another choice.

**Problem 4 - You're uncomfortable on your back / your back hurts**

A little bit of discomfort can be a good thing: it can prevent you from falling asleep too quickly. It is a problem if it distracts you from giving your full attention to the exit technique. If your back hurts, try placing a pillow or cushion under your knees. You can also practice in a recliner rather than on your back.

**Problem 5 - You get vibrations but they fade away**

If you can induce "the vibrations" that's another important milestone. I wrote about them in chapter 5. The bottom line is: Wait until the vibrations reach peak intensity, then try to sit up, stand up, or move away. If your physical body moves, you didn't have the right vibrations. If you are unable to move because your body is paralyzed, review chapter 7. If your non-physical body moves, you're already in an OBE, so go out and explore.

**Problem 6 - Your body snores but you don't go anywhere**

If you don't get any vibrations, don't worry about it. The vibrations are so mild for some people that they don't even notice them. So don't think you need to get vibrations before you

exit. You'll very likely know when it's time, even if you don't feel vibrations.

Instead of vibrations, you might just become aware that your body is snoring. This still happens to me from time to time. I'll be completely awake and aware, while my physical body is fast asleep and I can hear it snoring in the background. This means your body is asleep, and you are in the out-of-body state, but just don't realize it. You feel conscious and normal, so you never actually attempt to move away from your sleeping body. The solution is: try to sit up, stand up, or move away from your body, just like you would physically. If your body moves, you were still not "deep" enough. If you're in the proper state, your physical body won't move, but your non-physical body will. If it doesn't, but you're paralyzed, keep reading.

**Problem 7 - You're stuck / paralyzed when you get out**

This is another important milestone. It means your physical body has gone into sleep paralysis, (ASP) which is a normal, natural thing. The trick to turn ASP into an OBE is in chapter 7.

**Other Common Mistakes**

**Problem 1 - The rut of practicing halfheartedly**

After you've been trying to achieve OBEs a few months, you may get into a rut of making halfhearted OBE attempts. You've got to be passionate about this. You've got to try hard. You've got to keep pushing. Do you ever find yourself thinking, "I'll just spend my X minutes doing technique Y today, then I can say I made my daily OBE attempt"? That's the wrong attitude. That's a rut. You need to go into it with the expectation of success. Even if you've failed for five years, that's no reason to do it halfheartedly. You need to be passionate.

**Problem 2 - Not writing down your dreams**

It's very easy to get stuck in a pattern of not writing down your dreams or keeping a dream journal. I get it. You're busy. You don't have time to write down your dreams. You may tell yourself that you'll remember them later, and that's enough. Well, that may be true, but if you shortcut this, it'll make OBEs a lot less likely.

The dreams themselves are unimportant (well, maybe they are important, but that's another topic for another book). What is important is that when you write them down, it reinforces a neural pathway in your brain related to "paying attention" to what happens while you sleep.

If you wake up and immediately forget your dreams, you're basically telling your subconscious, "What happens over there (on the other side of the sleep barrier, but some would say 'veil') isn't important; flush it down the toilet" and that trivializes and minimizes your potential OBEs. Remember what I said in chapter 10 (The Four OBE States) about dreams, lucid dreams, shared dreams, and OBEs all being out-of-body states? Your subconscious groups them all together, so your attitude toward dreams spills over to the others.

When you write down your dreams, you're telling your subconscious, "What happens over there is important to me" and that implies dreams, lucid dreams, shared dreams, and out-of-body experiences. You need to reinforce that brain circuit that pays attention to what happens on the other side of sleep. I'll talk more about it in chapter 60.

**Problem 3 – Getting into a rut**

Another mistake people make is to follow the same procedure they did last time. It's important to change things up to avoid the ruts. There are a lot of variables when it comes to

inducing an OBE, and it often helps to vary them to see what works best for you.

Try different techniques and vary your environ-ment to keep your OBE practice fresh. Vary how much sleep you get the night before. Vary your diet. Vary how light or dark your room is. If you have a "sleep number bed" vary how hard or soft it is. Vary where you make your attempts. Vary which way your head is pointing. Vary how late in the day you drink caffeine. Vary everything you can, and be positive and optimistic about it. Hopefully, you'll find a variation that works best for you.

**Problem 4 - Not thinking about OBE until you try it**

Another common rookie mistake is to not think about OBEs until the end of the day, then make a halfhearted attempt. The problem goes back to your subconscious mind. Your subconscious is always working to solve your problems, but if you only think about OBEs once a day, your subconscious interprets them as having a very low-priority: they're unimportant.

The subconscious is priority driven, so you need to bump the priority. To do that, think about OBEs as often as you can throughout the day. Use a reminder or an app on your phone, and when it goes off, just pause to think about OBEs, and how much you desire one. Think about OBEs every time you visit the bathroom (WC, loo.) Think about it every time you open your refrigerator door. Be passionate about it. Have a burning desire to achieve it. Don't ever be complacent. Ask yourself, "Which OBE technique am I going to try next?" Ask yourself, "When I'm out of body next time, where am I going to go? What am I going to do?" Approach it with excitement and anticipation.

Motivating the subconscious mind is extremely important. In fact, it's the entire foundation of the indirect OBE induction strategy, which brings us to part 3.

[142] The supine position is lying on your back with your face upward.

[143] Lessons Out of the Body , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2001, chapter 22.

[144] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 104.

# Part 3 - The Indirect OBE Induction Strategy

# Chapter 47. Introduction to the Indirect OBE Strategy

In part 2, I focused on the "direct" OBE induction strategy, that is, exit techniques you perform going into sleep (the hypnagogic state), or coming out of sleep (hypnopompic state). Now it's time to talk about the "indirect" induction strategy; the proverbial "back door" to OBEs.

Sylvan Muldoon wrote the "fundamental law of astral projection" is to motivate your subconscious mind to move you out-of-body. [145] He wasn't exaggerating. Experts estimate 99 percent of all OBEs are spontaneous: they happen to people who aren't even trying, and they're often surprised when it occurs. In other words, they're not induced consciously, but subconsciously . So you could say that if you focus only on the direct strategy, you're focusing on the 1 percent. It may be more fruitful to focus your efforts on the other 99 percent: indirect techniques. It may take you months or even years of effort to induce an OBE using the direct techniques of part 2, but to your subconscious, it is child's play. It can get you there in a heartbeat. [146] It just needs the right motivation (and less sensory input). So the fundamental principle of this strategy is that the subconscious can and will give you OBEs if it has enough motivation or pressure to do so.

You may want to think of the indirect strategy as subconscious circumvention because you basically harness, coerce, cajole, or trick your subconscious into achieving an OBE. Just as your subconscious (as the gatekeeper or guardian of the threshold) can play tricks on you, so you can turn the tables and play tricks on it.

The advantage of subconscious circumvention is that

the techniques don't involve any kind of complex manipulation of the imagination like direct techniques. The disadvantage is that it can be more tricky, depending on how stubborn your subconscious is. You need to be persistent.

One of the most important steps with all the OBE strategies is to occasionally give it a few days' rest. A lot of people try very hard for months to have OBEs, to no avail, but as soon as they stop trying, they have one. That's because after they quit, the subconscious is suddenly allowed enough resources to solve the problem. That's what happened to me with my first OBE: I tried very hard to achieve it for nearly a month, but I only had my first one once I stopped trying. [147] It's almost as if my conscious mind was tying up resources needed by the subconscious to solve the problem.

My theory is that the subconscious tries to solve problems for the conscious mind, but it acts on a delayed queue. The conscious mind churns on problems, and queues work to the subconscious as it goes. In computer terms, the conscious mind acts like a running process and the subconscious acts like a delayed work queue in the kernel that works in the background. It has access to all the same resources and information as the conscious mind, but it has the same resource locking constraints. The problem is: if you constantly work on the problem consciously, you keep those resources locked, so the subconscious will never get enough resources to solve the problem. You (as the conscious mind) sometimes need to get out of its way and give it time and space to do its job.

In other words, bump the priority of OBEs, then back off and give the subconscious time to work. Work hard on OBEs for a week or two, then take a day or two off and stop thinking about OBEs altogether. Perhaps you can use those "days off" to

“loosen the TPJ” with energy exercises, which is the topic of the next chapter.

[145] The Projection of the Astral Body, Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington, Samuel Weiser, 1929, chapter 9, pg 170.

[146] The reason it’s so easy for the subconscious is because it does so every night when you fall sleep.

[147] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, pg. 38.

# Chapter 48. Chi Circulation, Energy Bouncing, and Chakras

(TPJ Loosening)

In part 2, I instructed you to induce OBEs by using your imagination (visual, auditory, tactile, or combinations) to trick your TPJ into accepting a new non-physical "story of experience." It turns out there are many simple everyday things you can do to trick your TPJ to loosen its tight grip on the physical senses.

From ancient times, Chinese masters taught students how to move so-called non-physical energy, "lifeforce," or "chi" (sometimes spelled "Qi") for martial arts. With exercises like Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong, you use your imagination to move the chi throughout your body in circular motions. In certain ancient traditions of India, such as kundalini yoga, the yogis similarly taught students to visualize non-physical energy moving upward along the spine to the top of their head, with special attention to energize "chakras," so-called non-physical energy centers in the body. Since this is a science-based book, you may wonder: Is there any scientific basis for chakras, kundalini, chi, or any other non-physical or semi-physical energy? None that I'm aware of.

Although I can't point to any credible scientific basis for chi, I've personally seen demonstrations of it. Back in the 1980s, I attended Tai Chi classes for seven years. My instructor, a small man, would sometimes stand in a bow and arrow stance and have three or four students (including me) push on his arm to try to topple him. We failed. As we pushed, he'd pinch his bicep (and other muscles) to prove they were completely limp and relaxed. He was using chi, not his muscles. I've spoken to many people who witnessed even more dramatic demonstrations. Tai Chi master T.T.

Liang, in his mid-80s, used to do the same thing, but he'd hold a chop stick sharpened at both ends between his chest and his wrist. He routinely threw strong 25-year old men literally across the room with his chi. It didn't take long for new students to learn why the walls of his studio were padded!

It turns out that it doesn't really matter if there's a scientific basis. Whether or not chi exists, these mental (and physical) exercises are really just loosening the tight grip of the TPJ. The TPJ is being forced away from the physical senses and made to pay attention to inner states, directed by your imagination.

My Tai Chi instructor taught us sets or "forms" of well-defined slow physical movements. While we did the movements, we also did a Taoist chi circulation exercise called the microcosmic orbit. Basically, you use your imagination to continuously circulate chi around your body in a circle. Daniel Kelley teaches that the "microcosmic orbit" is essential for inducing OBEs, lucid dreams, and similar experiences. [148] There's also a macro-cosmic orbit as well. First, the basics:

Focus on the "dantian," the "chakra" or energy center that sits about an inch (2.5cm) inside your belly, just below the belly-button. Imagine heat or energy sensations there.
Imagine the energy moving down to the root chakra at the bottom of your torso.
Move the energy up the spine, to the top of the head, the crown chakra.
Move it over the top of your head into the third eye chakra.
Move it down through the pallet, through the tongue (which is kept lightly touching the pallet.)
Move it down through the throat chakra.
Move it down through the heart chakra.
Move it back down to the dantien.

Imagine the chi energizes each of the chakras as it flows through them. The energy should always make a complete circle around your body, and stop at the dantien where the energy is stored for future use. You should not imagine the energy as a ball, but rather as a continuous stream that flows in a complete circle, like water running throughout your body.

Because of my OBEs, I experimented with moving chi in other ways, and eventually developed my own exercises. I still do these almost every day, and I recommend you do too. Although some of these may also be used as direct OBE induction techniques, you should consider them an exercise of your active imagination.

Perform these exercises any length of time, even just for a second or two. You don't need to be relaxed and can do them anytime, anywhere. You can even do them at work because all you do is use your active imagination. The important thing is to do them as often as possible. Start with one or two exercises every half hour or so. Here they are:

Form a circle with your arms extended in front, fingers about an inch (2.5cm) apart. Imagine energy/chi moving along your arms from left arm to right arm in fast-moving circles, across your back, and bridging the gap between your fingers. Move your hands a little further apart and feel the change of pressure or energy. Push them back together and feel the resistance. Now close your eyes and try it without looking.

Imagine chi extends out from your "third eye" (between the eyebrows) and back.

Imagine chi extends out from both the temples of your head. Unfocus your eyes as you do this.

Imagine one or two chi balls encircling your head simultaneously. Start with the balls a foot away from your head, then after a few revolutions, push them further away from your head as they

continue to circle. Then pull them back as they circle.
Imagine looking down on your physical body from above. Think to yourself, “That’s my body.”
Imagine looking at your physical body from behind it. Think to yourself, “That’s not me.”
Imagine you’re flying over hills and valleys.
Pretend you’re shooting out-of-body into outer space at a tremendous speed or light-speed. Robert Bruce actually suggests this as a direct exit technique. [149]
Imagine your body is vibrating, and the vibrations keep getting higher and higher until your soul is so rattled to the bone it can no longer hold onto the physical body. [150]
Repeatedly imagine you hear a sound only in your left ear, then the right ear, then back again.

I spent the winter of 2018 in Sedona, Arizona and went hiking in the mountains almost every day. I often stopped to meditate at the top of a peak overlooking the Crescent Moon ranch park. In my meditation, I would visualize a bolt of lightning shooting down through my body, into the rocks beneath me, all the way down to the center of the Earth. Then I’d imagine it shooting back up through my body into the far reaches of space. Then back down to the center of the Earth.

Robert Bruce is also a big proponent of Taoist chi circulation exercises to make OBEs easier. [151] Like me, Bruce developed his own variants, the “NEW” (New Energy Ways) system, also known as “energy bouncing” techniques. He makes it clear they are “extracurricular” activities meant to loosen you from your body and make your OBE attempts—which are done at a later time—more productive. He perfected energy bouncing and carried it further than anyone else in the genre. He devoted a large amount

of his book to the subject. Some of the things he suggests are:

Move the chi up and down your arms, up and down your legs (part of the macro-cosmic orbit).
Move the chi in circles around your body; up one arm and down the other, down one leg and back, down the other leg and back, etc.
Repeatedly use your imagination to touch or feel the walls in front and in back of you.
Repeatedly use your imagination to touch or feel the walls to your left and to your right.
Repeatedly use your imagination to touch or feel the floor and the ceiling.

The IAC teaches an energy technique designed to induce the "vibrational state" called "VELO," an acronym for Voluntary Energetic Longitudinal Oscillation. Author Nanci Trivellato wrote a nearly 500 page book that devotes a lot of time defining, teaching, and explaining the technique. [152] With VELO, you repeatedly oscillate the chi up and down the entire length of your body longitudinally, as if you're inside a big energy tube, creating a kind of harmonic resonance with the chi. In terms of electricity, if Taoist chi circulation is like direct current (DC), the IAC's VELO is like alternating current (AC).

Akhena (the "William Buhlman of France") suggested a similar technique. [153] In her "Fire and the Diamond" technique, you repeatedly bounce the chi ("the fire") from the root chakra to the "diamond" (the "third eye chakra") or to the top of the head (the "crown chakra") and back down the spine while doing a rhythmic breathing exercise. More about that in chapter 64. You can either do this as an energy bouncing exercise, or as a "direct strategy" exit technique in the hypnagogic or hypnopompic states.

I personally prefer to bounce the chi from the dantien (rather than the root chakra) to the third-eye chakra, but feel free to try both techniques.

**An Easier Way: Visualizing Music**

The problem I have with "VELO" and similar exercises is that I only seem to be able to push the energy slowly. The IAC recommends you accelerate the rate and push it as quickly as you can [154], but I have a hard time with that. Luckily, I found an easy alternative, and that's to visualize music like I suggested in chapter 2.

In my fourth book, Answers Within , I gave eight "musical interlude" exercises, many of which have you visualize the music with your mind as you listen. In other words, pretend you're a musical conductor, directing the music to rise and fall with each note. It's like following the peaks and valleys of sheet music in your imagination. [155]

It may even be more effective to combine musical interludes like this with energy bouncing. First, select a bouncy song that has big pitch spikes: quick-paced songs where the notes bounce up and down from low notes to high notes and back. Some of the songs I like to use are:

Into The Lens and Yours is No Disgrace by Yes.
Almost any song from The Grand Illusion by Styx.
Hoedown by Emerson Lake and Palmer.
Cercle d'Emeraude by Arven.
The Howling by Within Temptation.
War of the Universe by Luca Turilli.
Shake My Tree by Coverdale/Page.
Space Truckin' by Deep Purple.
Merlin the Magician by Rick Wakeman (bounces left to right and

high to low notes).
Cygnus X-1 by Rush.
The Test That Stumped Them All by Dream Theater.
I Robot by The Alan Parsons Project

Once you've chosen a song, close your eyes and listen to it. You don't need to use headphones, but it's more effective if you do. As you listen, visualize your energy or "chi" rising and falling with the pitch of the music. So if the song goes from low C1 to high C7, imagine your energy takes a big upward spike. If it goes from G7 to G1, imagine it takes a big downward spike. If you have trouble visualizing your energy, just visualize the notes themselves, as if you see the sheet music in front of you. Repeat this with several songs.

Another of my favorite techniques is to listen to the song "And You And I" by Yes, which is my favorite song of all time. At several points, the song uses a steel guitar to do upward pitch bending for a kind of pseudo-crescendo effect. Just like Kundalini yoga, I visualize energy shooting up my spine for each of these crescendos, and exploding like fireworks above my head.

As I mentioned in chapter 2, exercises like these help develop an artificial form of synaesthesia, the bleed-through of the senses, which makes you a better OBE candidate.

These energy exercises are well worth the effort, and I recommend you do at least some of them daily to condition your TPJ to pay more attention to inner states than outer events. The disadvantage of doing these exercises is that they may make you feel disoriented at times, even under normal circumstances. I've had an aversion to roller-coasters and carnival rides for years because of this.

[148] Behind the Veil , Daniel Kelley, 2018, chapter 6.

[149] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 272 – 273.

[150] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, pg. 44.

[151] ___, chapter 13.

[152] Vibrational State and Energy Resonance: Self-tuning to a higher level of consciousness, Nanci Trivellato, International Academy of Consciousness, 2017.

[153] Out of Body Experiences , Akhena, Channel Soleil Publications, 2013, pg. 140.

[154] They also stress that the "quantity" of energy pushed is by far more important than the speed.

[155] Answers Within , Robert Peterson, self published, 2012, pgs 19, 46, 72, 106, 127, 155, 178, 211.

# Chapter 49. Hypnosis and the Christos Technique

(High pressure coercion)

In the early twentieth century, when hypnosis became more commonplace, people quickly discovered they could use it to induce OBEs. It's quick, easy, and efficient, but the big problem is that only 10 to 15 percent of the general population are easily hypnotized. About 20 percent are completely resistant to hypnosis. Most people fall somewhere in the middle. Another problem is that it usually costs money, either for a hypnotist or a recording of one.

There are several hypnosis recordings designed to induce OBEs. One of the earliest I remember from the 1980s was from New Age teacher Dick Sutphen. Later, a group of people in the Australian city of Perth developed an assisted hypnosis technique called the Christos Technique, publicized in a couple books. [156] The problem with the Christos Technique is that it requires two helpers; one to massage your feet and ankles and another to massage your forehead. The massage alters the TPJ's body schema while the hypnosis is used. I tried this technique once, but found the whole process too distracting.

Today there are several hypnosis recordings to choose from; too many to keep track of. I can vouch for William Buhlman's recordings; he's got a perfect voice for it. If you don't want to buy the recordings, his book Adventures Beyond the Body has an extensive hypnosis script you can use to record your own. [157]

Not long ago I helped a hypnotist friend of mine, Madonna Kettler, develop her own OBE induction script. I've vetted that one, but I'm not sure where to download it, or how

much she charges for it. You can also search for OBE hypnosis recordings on youtube.com, but it's a grab-bag. I haven't tried any of these recordings, so I cannot vouch for them. Another option is to search for hypnosis scripts and record your own onto your phone, tablet, computer, or other playback device.

If you're resistant to hypnosis like me, you'll have to forget hypnosis and motivate your subconscious mind the old-fashioned way, which is the subject of the next chapter.

[156] A Door To Infinity , Gerald M. Glaskin, Prism Press, 1989, Windows of the Mind , Gerald M. Glaskin, Prism Press, 1999.

[157] Adventures Beyond the Body , William Buhlman, HarperSanFrancisco, 1996, pg. 197 – 202.

# Chapter 50. The Desire Factor and the Thirst Technique

(Low pressure coercion)

Many authors of OBE books agree that in order to be successful, it helps to have a burning desire because it motivates the subconscious.

The desire extends beyond just the desire for OBEs. One of the first people to write about the desire factor was Sylvan Muldoon. He suggested one way to achieve astral projection (as OBEs were then called) was to activate the subconscious "will" through desire: intense desire, suppressed desire, hunger, thirst, or enervation (lack of cosmic energy). For example, he suggested that if your body is thirsty, your subconscious will be motivated to move the astral body away from the physical body by its desire for water. [158]

Muldoon took this a bit too far and suggested a questionable way to induce OBEs: eat salty foods and don't drink anything before bed (unless it's also salty). Make yourself as thirty as possible before bed. Leave a glass of water on the counter in plain sight. The idea is to motivate your subconscious to move to the glass of water in the out-of-body state. I don't recommend this method because dehydration is a dangerous thing to play with.

Dr. Douglas M. Baker's dedicated an entire chapter of his book to "Separation and the Desire Factor." [159] Admir Serrano talks about it as well. [160] Preston Dennett has possibly the best advice:

> "What worked best for me seems to be a combination of intense willpower, desire, focus and intent. Only by obsessing myself with the subject was I able to generate out-of-body events." [161]

Robert Bruce similarly wrote:

> " The most important ingredients for any successful projection are enthusiasm and motivation. Without these, there will not be enough mental energy to succeed; you will either fail the exit or give up and fall asleep." [162]

The list goes on and on. So do whatever you can to encourage an intense burning desire for OBEs. Think about OBEs constantly. Obsess about it. Desire as strongly as you can to have an OBE. When you see, hear or read anything, think about how it relates to OBEs. Constantly play out OBE scenarios in your mind. Read OBE books, especially books with narratives. Saturate your subconscious mind with it, but don't forget to give yourself occasional breaks from it.

Another way to pressure the subconscious is through affirmations and prayers, which is the subject of the next chapter.

[158] The Projection of the Astral Body , Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington, Weiser, 1929, Chapter 9, "How I discovered that 'desire' is an activating factor," pg. 171.

[159] Practical Techniques of Astral Projection , Dr. Douglas M. Baker, Aquarian Press, 1977, pg. 35.

[160] Out and About , Admir Serrano, G-Raffix Books, 2014. pg. 57.

[161] Out-of-body Exploring , Preston Dennett, Hampton Roads Publishing,

2004, pg. 8.

[162] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 260.

# Chapter 51. OBE Affirmations and Prayers

(Low pressure coercion)

Affirmations are like a New Year's resolutions: they're thoughts you say to yourself to strengthen your resolve and ability to do something. They're so important I wrote about them in the first chapter of my first book. [163] They work for many reasons. First, it's a way to clearly communicate with your subconscious, even if you're resistant to hypnosis like I am.

It's not enough just to say the affirmation, you should think about it first, then say it slowly to yourself a few times. Each time you do an affirmation, put emotion behind your words and actually believe what you are saying.

Affirmations should be short, succinct, and positive. State the changes you want in your life, as if they are already yours. Use "I can" messages instead of "I don't want" messages. Also, affirm what you are willing to do to make it happen.

Because affirmations are such a powerful influence on your subconscious mind, avoid giving yourself negative messages. One of the first affirmations I ever used was, "I am very loose from my body." The message seemed innocent enough, but I discovered I had an underlying negative belief that being loose from my body meant that I was not quite healthy. After a few days, I started feeling disoriented, dizzy and on the verge of becoming sick. Luckily, I figured out what was happening and changed my affirmation. Here's an example from my first book: [164]

> "I can easily leave my body. Out-of-body experiences come naturally to me. To prepare, I will practice OBE exercises, cooperate with the universe, follow my

> impulses, act on my intuitions, share my knowledge, spread my love, and cooperate with my own Higher Self."

To that I'd add two things: First, allay your doubts: "I set aside all doubts, preconceptions, and expectations." Second, make it fun and uplifting: "This will be so fun and exciting!" Or you can use something simple like "I have OBEs quickly and naturally."

Keith Harary and Pamela Weintraub suggest "I'll allow myself to have an out-of-body experience" in their book. [165]

William Buhlman seems to like to add the word "Now" to almost every affirmation for added emphasis and a sense of urgency.

The best time to do affirmations is in the morning when you first wake up, and right before you fall asleep at night. That's when you're transferring control from and to your subconscious mind, so the communication channels are stronger.

**Say a prayer**

Many people around the world believe that prayers are heard by their deities, by God, or maybe by angels who carry them to God. Because this is a science-oriented book, I won't speculate on that. Regardless, prayers are, in fact, messages to your subconscious, and from there they reach the highest levels of your psyche. So say a prayer. Ask for whomever or whatever it is for help. For example, "I ask my higher self to protect and assist me in my OBEs."

Some authors recommend you add something like "I will allow help and guidance only from positive, loving beings

who have my best interests at heart."

I've had many OBEs in which I asked for, and received, assistance from an "invisible helper." I don't know for sure if these helpers are actual non-physical entities or just another buried part of my psyche. Regardless, they seem very willing to lend a hand. So ask any and all spirit guides, guardian angels, and non-physical helpers to assist you in your OBE efforts.

In chapter 16, I talked about Nick Barrett's book Spirit Guided Lucid Dreaming in which he relies heavily on asking for help from his spirit guides. So ask. "I ask non-physical guides and helpers to help me with this goal." Even if it's just psychological rubbish, it works.

In a way, prayers and affirmations are just variations of the same thing. Prayers are asking for assistance from your subconscious and whatever is connected to it further out of reach ("Please help me have OBEs") whereas affirmations are more like demanding assistance from the subconscious by changing its belief system and fundamental assumptions ("I have OBEs quickly and easily.") There are two more variations along the same lines called labeling and self-talk, and they are the subject of the next chapter.

[163] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, pg 6.

[164] ___, pg. 21.

[165] Have an Out-of-Body Experience in 30 Days , Keith Harary and Pamela Weintraub, St. Martin's Press, 1989, pg. 45.

# Chapter 52. Self-Labeling and Self-Talk

(Low pressure coercion)

Another way to coerce your subconscious into giving you OBEs is to harness a well-known phenomenon in psychology called labeling: people often accept a label that's been placed on them. Normally it has a bad connotation: If you tell a child he or she is stupid enough times, they'll start to "own" that label and believe it; they become stupid. Please don't do that. [166]

Labeling is powerful. It's exactly how Adolf Hitler brainwashed the nation of Germany during World War II. He labeled Aryans as proud and privileged people (among other things), he labeled Jews as a scourge, and he labeled his Nazi regime as righteous protectors. His propaganda machine was second to none in history. It was very effective and very evil.

The good news is that labeling also works in reverse: if you tell a child he or she is talented or smart, they take ownership of that too, and soon you've got a very talented or smart child.

It's not limited to children and it's not limited to talk or propaganda. We project labels subconsciously, maybe even telepathically, onto everyone, and they project labels back onto you. It affects us every day in ways so subtle we may not even know it happens. You think, "My coworker is lazy." Your coworker thinks, "She's a slave driver." Whether true or not, these labels have energy that's hurled from person to person. But you choose which ones stick and which roll off. So learn to see through the labels other people place on you (and others), and accept or reject them consciously : only you should define who you

are. It's also very important to control the labels you place on yourself. Never program yourself with negative messages. Never say, "I'm never going to get this." And if you catch yourself doing it, counter it with a positive message. "I'm getting better at this."

If you want to induce OBEs, label yourself as an OBEr. Label yourself an astral projector, out-of-body traveler, OBE explorer, or similar. The more you accept the label "astral projector," the easier it will be to achieve OBEs. It may be hard to accept the label of astral projector if you've never had an OBE yourself: you can pretend to claim the title but you may not really believe it at a subconscious level until you've actually had an OBE or two. Once you've had an OBE, it's easier to claim the title: "I've had an OBE, so that makes me an out-of-body explorer." Your subconscious is happy to put your beliefs about yourself into action. So if your subconscious really believes you are an out-of-body explorer, it will conspire to make it happen.

The same goes for "self-talk." This is the inner dialog we all have, and it can be about any little task in life, such as cooking a meal. Sometimes it starts out small, like when you think to yourself, "Crap. I screwed that up." Then it escalates to something negative like "I'm no good at this" or "I haven't been feeling well for weeks." Don't do that either. Negative self-talk only reinforces negativity. As with labels, whenever you catch yourself doing it, stop and send yourself a positive message: "I'm not bad at this. I'm actually quite talented. I'll do better next time."

So label yourself an astral traveler. Accept the label and make it yours. Also, watch your inner dialog. Don't accept negative self-talk. When it happens, counter it with positive self-talk, or even reinforcing music, which is the subject of the next chapter.

166 Children are especially susceptible to labeling because they haven't solidified their role in the world, and believe what adults tell them. So be careful about the labels you place on a child; it affects their entire life.

# Chapter 53. OBEs and Music

(Low pressure coercion)

The music you listen to also heavily influences your subconscious. I wrote about this in my book Answers Within . [167] Even if you fully realize a song is making a statement to call out the negativity, it still can influence you in a bad way. I really disliked most of the "Seattle Sound" music from the 1990s because of its negative lyrics. It negatively influenced millions of subconscious minds for years. Drawing attention to the negativity, and the labels, just reinforces them.

So another less forceful technique to influence your subconscious is to listen to OBE suggestive music. This is a lot like hypnosis, but for people like me who are resistant. I'll give you an example. One day in late December, 2016, I was driving home from my sister's house late at night, and the Kiss song "Rock and Roll All Nite" [sic] got stuck in my head for some unknown reason. I hate the song, but the fact that it had been dredged up from my subconscious was worth pondering.

I decided to do a little experiment to leverage my subconscious, using the song it sent me. The original Kiss song repeats ad nauseum: " I...want to rock and roll all night, and party every day." So to leverage my subconscious, I swapped the lyrics to be OBE-suggestive and started repeating this to myself all the way home: "I...want to lucid dream all night, and OBE every day."

Over and over I repeated my new version, while imagining the song playing in the background. Sometimes I'd switch the order of the message: "I...want to OBE all night, and LD

every day."

Next, I toyed with other lyrics from the song, adjusting them to my new OBE theme:

"You say you want to go for a spin.

The astral plane is open: let me in!

You drive us wild, we'll drive you out-of-body."

I did this practically the whole way home, which took about an hour.

The next morning I dreamt I was walking down a hallway, and thought to myself, "Now how in the heck can I induce more lucid dreams?" Then it occurred to me: "Hey. Wait a minute. I'm dreaming right now!" With that, I came to full conscious awareness and my dream became a lucid dream. I quickly dispelled the illusion of the dream and watched it dissolve (I'll explain how to do that in chapter 62). Then I found myself flying in a gray void, fully in the out-of-body state, off to my next adventure.

Over the years, I've amassed a large collection of music that reminds me of OBEs. Songs like "Kashmir" by Led Zeppelin ("I am a traveler of both time and space, to be where I have been..."), "Lights" by Styx ("But tonight the Lights will take me where I long to be.") and "Carry on Wayward Son" by Kansas ("Once I rose above the noise and confusion, just to get a glimpse beyond this illusion.") Songs like these influence your subconscious and make lucid dreams and OBEs a lot more likely.

Before we leave the subject of music, I need to address one more topic: chill-out music. Some people ask, "Can you

recommend any ‘chill-out music’ to listen to before I make my OBE attempt?”

I’ve always been a music lover, but historically, I’ve always had better luck if I don’t listen to any music at all 24 to 36 hours before OBE attempts. What works best for me is to listen to OBE-suggestive music Monday through Wednesday, absolutely no music Thursday evening or Friday, then make my OBE attempts Saturday and Sunday mornings.

The basis for this is that I’ve spent a great many years developing a close relationship with my subconscious, learning to communicate with it and studying how it operates. Although I can dialog with my inner voice (my subconscious) it seems as if some subconscious “packages”—especially music—are shipped “second-day air” so to speak. I’ve done many experiments where, for example, I’ll listen to three unrelated songs on a Tuesday evening, then nothing at all on Wednesday. Midday Thursday, when I’m working hard at my job as a computer analyst, suddenly my subconscious bursts through and interrupts me with one of the same three songs. If I dismiss it as noise and keep working, an hour or so later another one of the three songs intrudes on my thoughts. In other words, the music is bounced back by my subconscious to my conscious awareness after a couple days.

Incidentally, this delayed reaction also applies to meditation: If I meditate, I feel the positive benefits 24 to 36 hours afterward, and if I skip my daily meditation, I feel the negative effects 24 to 36 hours afterward. So I recommend meditating every day. There’s an old saying: “You should meditate a half hour every day, unless you’re too busy. If you’re too busy, you should meditate for an hour.”

My point is: While it’s good to feed your subconscious

with suggestive music, you don't want that feedback to interfere while you're trying to induce an OBE. You want one hundred percent of your focus, both conscious and subconscious, on the exit technique and nothing more. So in my opinion, "chill-out music" just unfocuses your subconscious from the task at hand: inducing an OBE.

It may be okay to listen to other sounds like binaural beats, hemi-sync, or infra-liminal sounds before you attempt your exit, but probably not music. I'll say more about these in chapter 65.

[167] Answers Within , Robert Peterson, self published, 2012, chapter 16.

# Chapter 54. OBE Narratives and Walk-Throughs

(Subconscious circumvention approach)

Here are two more highly effective ways to imprint OBEs on your subconscious without the use of hypnosis: Read OBE narratives (OBE stories) and do OBE walk-throughs. Since the language of the subconscious is mostly visual, as you read narratives and see them in your mind's eye, you send a loud and clear message of desire to your subconscious.

The idea here is to read books that contain OBE narratives. There are plenty to choose from. For nonfiction, I recommend books like The Study and Practice of Astral Projection by Robert Crookall, or The Out-of-Body Experience: An Experiential Anthology e dited by Rodrigo Montenegro , but my favorite is Jurgen Ziewe's book Multi-Dimensional Man . For fiction, I recommend The House Between the Worlds by Marion Zimmer Bradley, Kindred Spirits by Alan Brennert, or Nightflyer by Christopher Fahy.

When you read an OBE narrative, try to imagine yourself in that scenario. Pause occasionally to think about it. What would you have done? How would you react? Think to yourself, "That's so cool! That's exactly what I want to do. I want to do that too."

Even if you don't have any OBE narratives to read, you can still do OBE walk-throughs. What I mean is: Just sit (or lie) down, close your eyes and imagine yourself going through an OBE from start to finish. Imagine you feel the vibrations, sit up in your non-physical body, float up into the air weightlessly, and walk away from your physical body. Imagine putting your hand through

the wall to feel its texture. Imagine you look back and see your inanimate body lying on the bed. Imagine you launch yourself into space, leave the Earth far below, and fly free of gravity, without limitations. Imagine an OBE in as much detail as you can. Then, as before, pause occasionally and think, “Yes, that’s exactly what I want to do.” This will send a clear message to your subconscious mind that you want OBEs and you won’t stop until you get them.

# Chapter 55. Sneaking Past the Gatekeeper

(Subconscious circumvention approach)

I call this technique "sneaking past the gatekeeper" but you could also call it "watch yourself fall asleep." Basically what you do is work your way down to the hypnagogic state, then simply keep your mind completely still. Just watch what happens. Make your awareness so quiet, so blank, so small and insignificant that it seems almost nonexistent. You can watch the hypnagogic images, but again, don't take any interest in them. If you do, you'll be pulled unconscious.

On a normal night, your subconscious (the "gatekeeper") waits patiently for you to lose all conscious awareness. Within a few (five?) seconds of losing consciousness, it propels you out of your body. Many times this feels as if the floor drops out from under you, and you feel like you're falling as much as six feet (two meters) down. Despite the sensation of falling, you're really being pushed upward out of your body. Then your subconscious starts "recharging" your energy while you float quietly above your body, unconscious (at least, that's what Muldoon thought).

So the trick to this technique is to make your awareness so tiny and insignificant that you fool your subconscious into thinking you are "out cold." When your subconscious detects no activity in your conscious mind, it does its normal routine: it pulls you out-of-body. Once that process is complete, you can literally wrestle control away from it and voila: you're in a fully conscious OBE. You return your consciousness back to its normal state and go about exploring.

But beware: If you try to wrestle control too soon,

your subconscious will abort the OBE. Bewildered, it will think, "Wait. How did he or she (your conscious awareness) get through?" and you'll get slammed back into your body.

The trick is to not get drawn into the fantasy of the hypnagogic images that appear, and to keep your conscious mind so quiet that it fools your subconscious into thinking you're unaware.

By the way, if you wait too long before wrestling control, you can consciously watch the creation of a dream, which is called a "WILD," an acronym for "Wake Induced Lucid Dream." I've personally watched this happen, so again, I'm speaking from experience. As you watch, you can see how the dream scenery is created, how the characters are placed into the scene, then how they're made three-dimensional, given artificial personalities, and everything. Then your own body-image enters the dream-hallucination, which then seems to come to life, and you're lucid dreaming. Then your job is to transition from there to an OBE, which is covered in chapter 62.

Sometimes along the way, the vibrations may hit, which can be shocking and disturbing. If you're not prepared, it can jar you right out of your perfectly quiet state of mind.

This whole falling-asleep process can "go wrong" at several stages, and with different results. People often get slammed back into their bodies during the falling sensation, and that's all they remember.

Sometimes, you may see a hideous face appear and startle the hell out of you, and again, you'll be slammed back into your body. I've never figured out if these are mischievous "spirits" or just an artifact of my own subconscious (the guardian of the threshold), but they're scary nonetheless. Don't let this discourage you. Either way, your subconscious aborts and brings you back to full consciousness with no harm done.

If you have trouble visualizing, you may want to try this method. As in all OBE practice, you must have a lot of patience. It took me a very long time to be able to extend my conscious awareness that far into the dream cycle. Just try to go a little farther each night until you get the knack of it.

I also read a Facebook post from a guy who offered another trick related to the Gatekeeper. His trick is to slowly roll your eyes back and forth, as if pretending your body is in REM sleep. [168] He claimed that the act of slowly rolling your eyes is enough to convince your subconscious that the body is in REM sleep, and that lets you sneak more awareness or lucidity across the threshold. The same technique was also suggested by L. Jordan. [169]

[168] Although REM stands for Rapid Eye Movements, a lot of the eye movements are not rapid at all.

[169] Astral Projection Mastery , L. Jordan, self published, 2015, pg. 65.

# Chapter 56. The Sleep Directive Technique

(Subconscious circumvention approach)

This is one of the oldest OBE techniques ever documented. Aside from ancient, Renaissance, and Theosophy books, the oldest book ever written on astral projection was Méthode de Dédoublement Personnel by Dr. Charles Lancelin. [170] It's so old that Sylvan Muldoon complained about it in a personal letter to Hereward Carrington, which eventually led them to collaborate on their classic book from 1929. [171] Lancelin's book is 500 pages long, but its primary technique is to motivate or "dynamize" the unconscious will.

Rogo's interpretation suggests you should even "hyperdynamize" the will: "in fact, so that it is overcharged, and capable of bursting out, like champagne, when the cork is removed." He suggests you repeat to yourself many times just before dropping off to sleep, "I have will—I have energy" until you're overcome by sleep. [172] The procedure is similar to occult techniques in which the initiate is instructed to "hold the desire [for OBE] so strongly and with such focus that eventually the unconscious mind takes over control of the willing and causes the desired event to occur through occult means."

William Buhlman took this technique a step further. He suggested you silently repeat one of the following affirmations thirty to fifty times while nodding off, or until you fall asleep: [173]

"Now I'm having a conscious out-of-body experience."
"Now I'm having an OBE."
"Now I'm leaving my body."
"Now I'm slipping out of my body."

L. Jordan suggested another variation titled, “Make your body boring and your astral body beautiful.” [174] Rather than focusing on a verbal affirmation or desire, you fall asleep while imagining that your physical body is dull, boring, or black-and-white, while your non-physical body is bright, beautiful and colorful.

These techniques rely heavily on setting your intention plus allowing yourself to fall asleep, leaving the subconscious to fulfill your demand.

[170] Méthode de Dédoublement personnel: Extérioration de la neuricité, Sorties en astral , Dr. Charles Lancelin, Henri Durville, Paris, 1908.

[171] The Projection of the Astral Body , Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington, Weiser, 1929. For as much as he criticized Dr. Lancelin, Muldoon also extolled the virtues of motivating the subconscious will, as we saw in chapter 49.

[172] Leaving the Body , D. Scott Rogo, Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1983, pg. 24.

[173] Adventures Beyond the Body , William Buhlman, Harper San Francisco, 1996, pg. 188.

[174] Astral Projection Mastery , L. Jordan, self published, 2015, pg. 43.

# Chapter 57. The Wake Back To Bed (WBTB) Technique

One of the most popular OBE techniques (and a favorite of Michael Raduga [175] ) is Wake Back to Bed, or WBTB for short. It's halfway between a direct and indirect technique. It's used by both OBErs and lucid dreamers alike.

The scientific basis for this technique goes back to recent surveys that indicate sleep paralysis (the same ASP from chapter 7) is more common among people with disturbed sleep patterns. For example, another name for sleep paralysis is "night nurses paralysis" because it's common among nurses who work the night shift, who tend to have more broken sleep. [176]

The idea is to break your sleep cycle up at a critical juncture, then go back to sleep to inject more conscious awareness into the last sleep cycle. The technique goes like this:

Set an alarm clock to wake you up after 6 hours of normal sleep.

When the alarm wakes you up, stay up for 3 to 50 minutes.

Go back to bed with the intention of having an OBE. Sometimes that's all you need. But if you don't have an OBE, proceed to step 4.

When you wake up again naturally, try not to move. Instead, perform one of the direct exit techniques from part 2.

## Interrupting Sleep

After you interrupt your sleep, stay awake a while to bypass the normal hypnopompic imagery you would have had. Your brain chemicals are forced into a "waking" pattern, even though you still have enough melatonin in your system to keep your body asleep.

When you interrupt sleep, it's like stopping the washing machine mid-wash cycle. Your body wants to restart the cycle where it left off, but since REM brain patterns are similar to waking consciousness, your brain can either just skip over that part (wake up) or start the next sleep cycle.

**Why interrupt sleep at six hours?**

Different authors recommend different amounts, [177] but the six hour figure seems more ideal to me because it interrupts one of the later sleep cycles. That ensures your brain is as "clean" as possible and therefore ready for full consciousness. If you interrupt an earlier cycle, you may drop back into non-REM sleep and not be able to retain consciousness. Plus there's still too much melatonin in your system, which means you'll still be drowsy.

**How long should you stay up?**

When the alarm goes off, t he length of time you stay up varies from 3 to 50 minutes because some people are light sleepers and some are heavy sleepers. It has to do with the hormones. If you're a light sleeper, three minutes might be enough to jolt your body into lucidity. If you're a heavy sleeper, you need to give your body more time to rebalance your "consciousness" brain chemicals to a point where full conscious awareness will not just slip away. You may need to experiment with this until you find a length of time that works best for you.

**Use an alarm to wake up**

It might be tempting to try to shortcut the process and attempt OBEs when you wake up naturally between sleep cycles. While it's possible to induce OBEs then (in fact, better than trying before bed), it's better to use an alarm to interrupt your sleep: if

you wake up naturally, your brain will naturally fall into its normal rhythm and start the next sleep cycle.

Ideally, you want to interrupt the end of non-REM (nREM) sleep, not REM sleep. If you interrupt REM sleep, your brain will just start a new sleep cycle from the beginning (and you'll fall asleep and lose your OBE). If you interrupt nREM sleep, your brain will want to restart the "cleaning" cycle where it left off, but the interruption gives you time to build enough of those "consciousness chemicals" to retain lucidity, thus an OBE.

**If you wake up naturally in the middle of the night can you do it?**

While it's possible to induce an OBE in the middle of the night, it's not ideal. Your body is conditioned to automatically start new sleep cycles from start to finish. It's more OBE-productive to interrupt nREM in the middle.

**Why do you have to set the alarm so far ahead? Can't you just interrupt sleep earlier?**

While it's technically possible to interrupt an earlier cycle and get results, there's a good chance your brain won't be "clean" enough to give you enough lucidity. Your body is likely to just drop you back into another sleep cycle.

**What direct exit technique should you use?**

Almost any direct exit technique in this book will work with WBTB, or you can do "technique cycling," which is the topic of the next chapter.

[175] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 59.

[176] Seeing Myself: The new science of out-of-body experiences, 2017, Susan J. Blackmore, pg 146.

[177] For example, Albert Taylor recommends 4 hours: go to bed at 9:00 p.m. with the alarm set to go off at 1:00 a.m. Soul Traveler , Albert Taylor, Verity Press Publishing, 1996, pg. 130.

# Chapter 58. WBTB and Technique Cycling

Michael Raduga has his own take on the Wake Back To Bed (WBTB) technique. [178] He suggests that instead of trying an exit technique in step 4, you cycle through two or three of them. You don't want a long list of techniques to try to remember. Don't waste time thinking, "Which technique should I try next?" Don't think about it; just act. Just pick two or three ahead of time, and then cycle through them repeatedly. He recommends one of these:

**Target Technique** – Imagine you are standing in front of your bathroom mirror. This is the technique I covered in chapter 19.

**Rotation** - Imagine you are spinning inside your body. This is the technique in chapter 32.

**Observing images** - watch hypnagogic images that appear before you. This is similar to the hypnagogic technique in chapter 45.

**Hand visualization** - Visualize your hands. This is similar to the "swinging arms" technique I described in chapter 28.

**Swimmer technique** - Pretend you're swimming in the water. This is a motion-based technique similar to the "running" technique in chapter 31.

**Phantom wiggling** - Try to imagine a part of your astral body is moving; a little at first, but then it increases. He recommends your little finger. This is similar to the "almost move" technique in chapter 30.

You can use any of the exit techniques in this book once you get to that point.

Raduga has his own variant of the WBTB technique that goes something like this:

Choose 2 or 3 exit techniques from the list above.

Set an alarm clock for six hours after you go to bed. Since normal sleep cycles are about 90 minutes long, six hours coincides with the end of the fourth sleep cycle. This maximizes the chance of lucidity when you drift back down.

Wake up with the alarm.

Stay awake 3 to 50 minutes. Stay awake longer if you're a heavy sleeper, less time if you're a light sleeper, as explained in the previous chapter.

As you drift back to sleep, hold the intention that when you wake up again, you will not move your physical body. If you do move, don't worry; it's not critical.

Go back to sleep another full sleep cycle. Because your body is mostly well rested, you may also have several short (abbreviated) sleep cycles rather than a full 90 minute cycle. But be prepared to spend the next 2 to 4 hours in bed.

Allow yourself to wake up naturally this time. Remember: Try not to move when you wake up.

Try for immediate relocation. Imagine you are standing at your bathroom mirror. This is pretty much the target technique from chapter 19. It doesn't have to be your mirror, but that's Raduga's first choice. Don't spend much time on this; only a few seconds. If that doesn't work, proceed to step 9.

Try for immediate separation from your body. Try levitating, standing up, or rolling out, with your astral body only (careful not

to move your physical body). Again, don't spend more than a few seconds on this. If that doesn't work, go on to step 10.

Start "technique cycling." Try each of the techniques you chose in step 1 for three to five seconds, then move on to the next one. If a technique gets results, focus on it a bit longer and try to encourage those results. For example, if you feel vibrations, or feel like your astral body is moving, keep working that technique. If it doesn't get results after three to five seconds, switch to the next technique. If none of these exit techniques get results, repeat the process again, starting with the first technique. Cycle through them regardless of whether you did or did not move your body when you woke up.
Perform at least 4 complete cycles. Don't give up until you've spent a full minute cycling through those two or three exit techniques, for 4 complete cycles (or until you're out of body).

If you didn't get out of body within a minute of trying, go back to step 5. Go back to sleep for another short period, with the intention of not moving when you wake up, then repeat the process.

Raduga claims to have a lot of success teaching people to induce OBEs using WBTB combined with technique cycling. [179] If you're not successful with either direct or indirect strategies, you may want to approach OBEs from the lucid dream state. That's what we'll talk about next.

[178] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 59.

[179] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 59.

# Part 4 - Turning Lucid Dreams into OBEs

# Chapter 59. Lucid Dreaming

The first person who documented the ability to turn lucid dreams into OBEs was Oliver Fox (Hugh G. Callaway) in articles for The Occult Review in 1920 and later, in his book Astral Projection: A Record of Out-of-the-Body Experiences . [180] The term "lucid dreaming" wasn't even coined back then; he simply called them "dreams of knowledge," meaning he had the knowledge he was dreaming from within the dream. One night he dreamt he was walking down the sidewalk when he noticed the sidewalk was not normal; the squares were going the wrong direction. He realized the only reasonable explanation was that he was dreaming.

By definition, a lucid dream (LD) is a dream in which we are conscious (lucid), and fully aware that we're dreaming. In my discussion of the four OBE states (chapter 10) I described a lucid dream as an OBE in which we're fully conscious, but trapped inside a subjective experience; a self-created hallucination we call a dream. In a lucid dream, you know you're asleep and dreaming, and you have a normal body schema. That is, your dream body appears the same as your physical body.

In the OBE, you know you're not dreaming, just like when you're awake, and your body schema is more ethereal and "on demand." I like to call it Schrödinger's astral body because it's usually in an indeterminate state until you direct your attention to it. That's not to say your lucidity is superior in an OBE. In fact, it's often not: LDs tend to be more cosmic, ecstatic, and crystal clear than OBEs, which are often murky, dark, or encumbered. There are many differences between LD and OBE, but it's beyond the scope of this book. [181]

Since lucid dreams are right next door to the OBE state

(in the diagram from chapter 10), you can transition from LD to OBE. I'll talk about that more in chapter 62.

Although I've had many lucid dreams, I don't consider myself an expert. For a more comprehensive list of LD techniques, I recommend Lucid Dreaming Plain and Simple by Robert Waggoner and Caroline McCready. Nonetheless, here are some pointers and habits that may help you induce lucid dreams:

Condition yourself to always question reality and constantly look for anomalies. Does what you see and hear make sense?
Develop reality check habits. Ask yourself several times everyday, "Am I dreaming?"
Use phone apps like "Awoken" to remind you to do reality checks.
Get or make a reminder bracelet. I have one that simply says "Am I Dreaming?"
Get a refrigerator magnet that questions reality.
Imagine staring at your own hands.
Harness your dream fear, as suggested in chapter 8.
Keep a dream journal, which is the topic of the next chapter.

[180] Astral Projection , Oliver Fox, Citadel Press, 1979.

[181] I wrote a chapter in my second book about the differences between LD and OBE: Lessons Out of the Body , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2001, chapter 25.

# Chapter 60. Keeping Dream and OBE Journals

(Subconscious trick approach)

Almost every book on lucid dreaming recommends you keep a dream journal. Many of the OBE books do too. It's a well-known fact that keeping a dream journal helps you to induce lucid dreams and OBEs, but to a lot of people it feels like a burden or a waste of time. It may seem like you don't dream, and when you do, your dreams are nonsense anyway, so why bother?

I know keeping a dream journal is a pain. It takes a lot of time and effort, and some mornings you just don't want to mess with it. However, it does help your ability to induce lucid dreams and have OBEs. The science behind it has to do with memory management and how humans compartmentalize information. Robert Bruce wrote how important it is to carry memories from the non-physical state back to the physical, [182] and he was right. He wrote that we have "shadow memory" that needs to be passed from the non-physical body to the physical brain, otherwise we forget we even had an OBE. I don't subscribe to that theory, but he's not too far off the mark.

Our brains are constantly bombarded with gigabytes (if not terabytes, petabytes, or exabytes) of information: visual data, audio data, tactile data, as well as taste and smell, plus feedback from our own body on things like hunger, thirst, oxygen levels, pain levels, etc. All this sensory data arrives simultaneously to the brain. If it all got through to your conscious self at once, it would be overwhelming. So your brain has very complex "data filters" (for lack of better words) to make sure the only data passed from subconscious to conscious is the "important stuff." The reason

drugs like LSD are so overwhelming is that they temporarily disable your brain's natural data filters.

One of the ways our brains keep this barrage of information manageable is to compartmentalize it. It's like a computer's file system, split up into many directories: all the information is automatically filed into different categories.

Sometimes our brains need to process this information quickly. For example, if there's a sound, you need to be able to instantly judge whether it's a threat, and you use your memory to decide that. For example, when you hear the sound of a pistol being cocked or shotgun being pumped based on your memory of the sound, you decide it's a threat. So each category is assigned a priority, and each memory is also assigned a priority based on the likelihood of needing that information.

What does science know about this memory sorting? A 2011 article in Scientific American magazine talks about the "doorway effect." [183] It explains a phenomenon known to many, especially when you get older: You walk into a room, then pause and ask yourself, "Now why did I come in here?" The article is based on the work of a team of researchers at the University of Notre Dame who published a paper titled: "Walking through doorways causes forgetting." The article explains:

> "The doorway effect suggests that there's more to the remembering than just what you paid attention to, when it happened, and how hard you tried. Instead, some forms of memory seem to be optimized to keep information ready-to-hand until its shelf life expires, and then purge that information in favor of new stuff."

Well, it's not purged; it's just archived to deeper "hard-

to-fetch" storage. Our brains automatically prioritize or set aside memory based on perceived need. For example, when you walk from the living room to the kitchen, you're less likely to need living room memories again, so the living room's memories are filed away to longer-term storage, then dumped from short-term memory, making them harder to access. Only the kitchen's information is important now, so you forget why you came. If you walk back into the living room again, those memories are shuffled back to the top, given a higher priority again and you can usually remember your original goal.

This shuffling of information and memory is all done automatically by the brain, but the good news is: you can program it. You can control the priority. You can reinforce the importance of carrying the information over by practicing it over and over, which makes it easier. If you tell yourself, "When I get to the kitchen, I will remember that I need to do this" your brain and subconscious will learn to comply and give your living room memories higher priority, and therefore make them easier to access. So when you get to the kitchen, you remember what you planned in the living room.

This applies directly to OBEs and lucid dreams because it's not just doorways. Although the magazine article didn't say it, I believe the brain uses other barriers to compartmentalize; not just doorways. The biggest and most glaring is when you transition from a waking to a sleeping state, and back. Your dream memories are automatically shuffled to the bottom of the heap as "unimportant nonsense" because you've reinforced that all your life. So remembering your dreams is a struggle, if not impossible. Conversely, remembering your waking life during a dream is all but impossible too. I believe this explains Robert Bruce's observations about shadow memories. He was right that we need to train ourselves to carry memories forward from sleeping to

waking (just like through a doorway), but I think he got the actual logistics wrong.

When you keep a dream journal, you force your subconscious to carry memories and information from the sleeping state forward to the conscious state. The information is carried through the proverbial doorway of sleep.

The other thing is: To recall a dream, you need a certain fragment of awareness in the dream. You need enough lucidity—a tiny connection from the sleeping state to conscious state—to pay attention to what's happening, in order to be able to recall it in the morning. When you keep a dream journal it forces your subconscious to allow more conscious awareness (lucidity) on the other side of the sleep barrier. And lucidity is exactly what you need for both OBEs and lucid dreams (the upper half of the four states diagram from chapter 10).

So why bother with a dream journal? Because the act of dream journaling programs your subconscious to carry the information across the threshold or doorway of sleep and it tells your subconscious to keep an open connection during sleep.

You may be wondering, what if you don't dream? Science has proven that everyone dreams, multiple times every night. It's just that you don't remember. If you can't remember your dreams, you've got to make it a habit. Here are some things to jump-start the process:

Take vitamin B-6 before bed, but don't take more than 100mg per day. Don't take it every day. Take it for a few days, then stop for a few days. This helps with dream recall, at least for me. More about vitamins and supplements in chapter 67.

Before you go to sleep, tell yourself, "Tomorrow morning, I'm going to remember my dreams."

Imagine yourself the next morning waking up, sitting up in bed,

and recalling your dreams.
Tell yourself, “Yes, that is exactly what I’m going to do.”
Repeat steps 2, 3 and 4 several times, then go to sleep.

In the morning when you wake, before you sit up, close your eyes and try to remember anything you can about the dreams you just had. Focus on any little fragment that comes in. “It had something to do with a man” Then follow it where it takes you. “The man was trying to take me somewhere...” And so forth.

Once you’re up, write down the dream as best as you can. The more details you write down, the more will trickle in from your subconscious. If you’re too busy to write down the dream, just write down a few keywords to trigger your memory later, and write it down when you have more time.

It also helps to revisit your dream journal and read the last few pages every so often. This stresses to your subconscious how important it is to keep the connection open. If you don’t remember any dreams in the morning, read through the last few dreams in your dream journal and vow to do better the next morning.

**Dream Maps**

Michael Raduga suggests you create a “map” of all the places you habitually visit in your dreams. [184] I once did this in the 1980s (maybe even before Raduga was born!) and wrote down more than 100 different dream “locations” I remembered to have habitually visited in recurring dreams. When you make up a map to connect various dream locations, it reinforces the importance of the dreams to your subconscious mind. It also ties the dreams back to the real world.

Daniel Kelley takes it a step further. He dedicates a great deal of his book to the study and classification of the

different types of dreams. He breaks them down into different categories, and teaches you how to identify and categorize them. [185] When you habitually identify your dreams by the patterns they follow, you learn to recognize when your experiences follow those patterns, and therefore learn to identify when you're dreaming. It's also a good step toward identifying your dream signs.

**Dream Signs**

Dream signs are common features unique to your dreams. They're often symbolic. For example, one of my dream signs is a bear: I used to see bears in my dreams a lot, so I trained myself to use bears to trigger lucidity. In other words, whenever I see a bear, I seriously question whether I'm dreaming. (Since I live in central Minnesota, it's not uncommon to see bears. I've had to chase them off my deck raiding my bird feeders!) So pay attention to the signs and symbols that appear in your life (both dreams and waking life), and develop the habit of questioning whether you're dreaming every time you encounter them.

**Dream Incubation**

Another good practice is dream incubation, which is almost like hypnosis. Sometime in the middle of the day, spend ten or more minutes to just close your eyes and imagine a dream you want to have that night. For example, close your eyes and tell yourself, "Tonight I'm going to dream about a rainbow. When I see a rainbow, I'll know I'm dreaming and become lucid." Then imagine a dream in which you see a rainbow. Affirm this over and over, and try to imagine what the dream will be like.

If you develop these three habits (keep a dream journal, learn your dream signs, and dream incubation), your lucid dreams and OBEs will increase. I'm not always as disciplined as I

should be, but I do keep both a dream journal and a separate OBE journal. The key is to give yourself a reminder before bed, and form a habit of dream recall. And that brings us to the next subject: reminders and habits.

[182] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 298.

[183] Charles B. Brenner, Scientific American, December 13, 2011, "Why Walking Through a Doorway Makes You Forget."

[184] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 247.

[185] Behind the Veil , Daniel Kelley, 2018, chapters 2 (The Seven Categories of Dreams), 5 (Mapping Wonderland: Formatting Your Dream Journal), and other references sprinkled throughout the book.

# Chapter 61. Appointments, Trigger Mechanisms and Anchors

Once when I taught an OBE class at the Wainwright House in New York, I told my students, "Before I start talking about this next subject, can someone please remind me when it's 12:15? There's something very important I need to do at 12:15. Please; it's very important."

When 12:15 rolled around, several hands went into the air and they reminded me of the time.

I lied. There was nothing important. I was only making a point. This was just an interactive demonstration that we all have a way to set up subconscious reminders, and that you can do the same thing to harness OBEs.

It doesn't work to just tell yourself "At 3:00 a.m., I'm going to become lucid in my dream." You need to put some weight behind the message. You need to tell yourself in the same way you would for something very important. For example, when you're at work, you might tell yourself, "I can't forget the staff meeting at 3:00." Then later you look at your watch and "by coincidence" it's 2:58 [186]. Or when you're returning from a trip, you might tell yourself, "I've got to wake up at 6:00 a.m. to catch my flight by 9:00 a.m." and you do.

Akhena suggested a powerful indirect technique that uses a "trigger mechanism" to induce OBEs. [187] It works off the same principle as when you tell yourself you've got something important coming up. What you do is feed your subconscious powerful suggestions regarding some trigger mechanism or a cue.

In the previous chapter I suggested a rainbow: “The next time I see a rainbow, I’ll become lucid.” You can use anything. “The next time I see a man with a mustache, I’ll become conscious and lucid.”

Akhena was a master of using habits to generate OBEs. She developed a habit that every time she walked into a room, she flipped on a light switch. If the lights went on, she knew she was in the real world, i.e. waking reality. If the lights didn’t go on, she knew she was dreaming, and that triggered lucidity. So find a set of circumstances that you often find yourself in when you dream, and modify your waking behavior to trigger lucidity in those circumstances.

Some habits are easier to form than others. For example, I’ve found it’s difficult for people to form the habit of asking themselves if they’re dreaming whenever they cross a threshold to another room because of the “doorway effect” from the previous chapter: doorways cause our brains to drop memories. It’s easier to develop a habit like periodically checking to see if your finger will push through your hand. If it does, you’ll know you’re dreaming. If it doesn’t, you’re probably not. Many lucid dreamers pull their finger from time to time: If your finger stretches, you’re dreaming. If it doesn’t you’re probably not. Form these habits so you automatically do them several times a day. Since daytime habits carry over into our dreams, there’s a good chance you’ll do it in the dream state, catch yourself dreaming, and become lucid.

Habit-based triggers work in real life, but they don’t always carry over into dreams. For example, in waking life, I look at my watch or phone every ten minutes or so, but in all the years I’ve done this, I don’t think I’ve ever once looked at either one in

my dreams. So you need to find a habit that will carry over into your dreams. Keeping a dream journal will help you find your dream habits.

Some people use phone apps or visual cues (like seeing your hands) to remind them to question whether or not they're dreaming. This can work if it's done consistently enough, but it's also prone to complacency and laziness: if you rely on your phone to remind you, it'll never happen in your dreams. In other words, you should use your phone to learn and develop the questioning behavior, but you need to focus on the learned behavior rather than relying on the phone.

In my opinion it's much easier to set up an agreement with yourself. For example, tell yourself, "Ten (or fifteen) minutes from now I'm going to question whether or not I'm dreaming." Then, as time passes, remember that goal and ask yourself seriously if you're dreaming. This triggers your subconscious mind into action. If it's longer than the agreed-upon time, chide yourself, "Oh, it's been too long since I've asked. I've got to ask myself more often." When you do remember to ask yourself "Am I dreaming?" give it careful consideration, then tell yourself, "Yes, that's perfect. And ten (or fifteen) minutes from now, I need to do the same again." In other words, try to develop the habit without psychological crutches like your phone.

**Important** : in my experience, it's much more effective to affirm, "Fifteen minutes from now..." than it is to affirm, "Every fifteen minutes...." The subconscious is lousy at "every" and needs specific goals like "fifteen minutes from now."

Here are some tricks OBE teacher Todd Acamesis uses: every so often (in waking life), ask yourself three important questions:

**Does this situation make sense?**

Dream situations often don't make sense. You find yourself in a helicopter. Does that make sense? Is that normal behavior? For some people, maybe it is. If not, it can trigger lucidity.

**How did I get here?**

If you ask yourself how you got to that location, you might see the discrepancy and discover that you're dreaming. Did you get there by car? Did you take a train? Did you walk there? Sometimes you can see the disconnection and become lucid.

**Where was I previously?**

Dreams often don't have a beginning; you just suddenly find yourself in a set of circumstances and assumptions, and one of those is your current location. You're in a castle in Germany; where were you just prior? If you question the chronology of prior events, you'll sometimes see the problem and become lucid.

Work to develop habits during the daytime that carry over into your dreams. Learn to constantly question reality. Question what's happening. Test reality: Does it follow the laws of physics? The more often you test reality during the day, the more you'll test it in your dreams, and move from an ordinary dream to a lucid dream. From there you can either enjoy the lucid dream or turn it into a full-blown OBE. That's the subject of the next chapter.

[186] It's not coincidence. It's your subconscious.

[187] Out of Body Experiences , Akhena, Channel Soleil Publications, 2013, pg. 67.

# Chapter 62. Turning Lucid Dreams into OBEs

It is usually easy to transition from a lucid dream to an OBE. All you need to do is dispel (dismiss) the dream hallucination. In other words, you "wake up" without waking your physical body. For the most part, it is simply an act of will. You turn your attention away from the dream hallucination and back to the more objective OBE environment. You can also tell yourself to "stop hallucinating" or demand that the dream ends. For greater emphasis, you can also use William Buhlman's "Now" suffix, as in "Reality Now!" or "Dispel the illusion now!"

When this happens there's just a sudden, complete shift of attention to a different kind of experience, different environment, and different mode of perception. The dream-hallucination dissolves in front of you, but it happens quickly, like waking up, or like turning off a television. At that point you'll "wake up" in an OBE and find yourself in your bedroom, peacefully floating just above your physical body. Your body schema will be less stable. Your eyesight may seem less like physical eyesight and more like touching the room with your awareness. You'll intuitively know you're not dreaming anymore, just as in waking life.

In all my years of doing this, I've only failed once to escape the dream.

It's easier to induce a lucid dream and turn it into an OBE than it is to induce an OBE through the direct or indirect strategies. If that method also eludes you, it might be time to take more drastic measures like assisting technologies, which brings us to part 5.

# Part 5 - Brain Hacks and Assisting Technologies

# Chapter 63. Introduction to Brain Hacking

In ancient religious, spiritual, and occult traditions, devotees obtained altered states of consciousness like OBEs only through years of meditation and hard work (or purely by accident). There were no shortcuts.

There's nothing wrong with years of hard work and meditation. There are still many purists who believe it's the only "proper" way to achieve mystical states. Yet many of these so-called purists are already brain-hacking without even realizing it. They wake up every morning to an alarm clock: a device that artificially breaks their sleep cycle. Then they stumble to the kitchen and drink coffee: the brain stimulant caffeine. They listen to music on the car ride home from work: consciousness altering sound technology. They come home and use artificial lights in their homes: mind altering light technology. Then they stare into the artificial blue light of their cellphone to play a game before bed, which alters their sleep patterns. Yet they still think of themselves as purists.

Indigenous people probably invented the first forms of early brain hacking: things like sweat lodges, trance drum circles, ecstatic dance, vision quests, fasting, hyperventilation and special breathing techniques. Later, brain hacks like hypnosis, Kaballah and Kundalini yoga were born.

Sometime later, healers and shamans seeking natural medicines discovered "brain hacking" plants that either caused powerful hallucinations (like mescaline) or unlocked expanded states of consciousness like ayahuasca, and psilocybin (magic mushrooms). The authorities of these societies quickly realized that

if the common folk could induce their own mystical states and gain access to their own religious truths, they could usurp their authority and control. So they declared these plants "sacred" and locked them away from the common folk. They could only be used by the religious leaders as part of special ceremonies. They controlled the common people by keeping them in the dark.

In the modern era, science and medicine have uncovered remarkable secrets of the human body and brain that enable us to take shortcuts. I like to think of these as "brain hacks" because to a computer guy like me, it seems a lot like computer hacking. In fact, many people like to think of the human brain as a kind of complex biological computer, but there are many differences that go beyond the scope of this book. [188]

We've already talked about several brain hacks already. Things like flotation tanks, sleep masks, and "Koren helmets." You could even say that meditation is a form of brain hacking because it knocks your brain out of its usual din of internal chatter. In fact, almost all the OBE techniques in this book could be considered brain hacks. But what I'm talking about goes much deeper. I divide brain hacking into roughly five categories:

Breath work (like hyperventilation)

Sound technologies (like binaural beats)

Light technologies (like Nova Dreamer)

Dietary considerations (like a vegetarian diet)

Vitamins, herbal supplements and probiotics (like galantamine)

Let's start with breath work.

[188] For example, computers are digital devices whereas brains are completely analog. Computers have a number of processors (cores or CPUs), whereas brains have billions of neurons that somehow work in cooperation, almost as if each one is its own core.

# Chapter 64. Breath Work and Proper Breathing

Many OBE books recommend various breathing practices when preparing to have an OBE. How important is proper breathing to the process? It's important enough that one of William Buhlman's OBE induction tracks begins with the words "Breathe deeply and relax completely." Robert Crookall, author of several OBE books, dedicated an entire book to the subject. [189]

Many authors suggest taking a few deep breaths before you begin your technique. After that, slow your breath, but naturally: don't force it. Oliver Fox (Hugh G. Callaway) wrote "I lay on my right side, keeping as still as possible and taking deep rhythmic breaths." [190] Richard Craze suggests taking a breath every 10 heartbeats, although that seems excessive to me. [191]

Akhena built "rhythmical" breathing into her "Fire and Diamond" technique. [192] She says to inhale and exhale through the mouth, with the mouth "only just open" and the tongue positioned at the joining of the palate and the upper teeth, between the two incisors. You take long slow breaths in while you push the "fire" (chi) up your spine to your head, hold your breath for a few seconds and the Fire will shoot out of the top of your head. Then exhale gently and deeply and the Fire will descend back into your head, then into your spinal column. Then hold your breath empty for a few seconds, then repeat the process.

Robert Bruce suggests "Breathing Loosening" in which you breathe normally, but as you breathe in, you imagine your body is expanding to fill the room while the room itself shrinks. As you exhale, imagine your body is shrinking into itself like a collapsing balloon, "as if you were a minute point of consciousness, a tiny spark in a giant, oversized room." At the end

of the out breath, briefly feel the spacial coordinates of the entire room as being far, far away. [193]

Dr. Douglas M. Baker gives a breathing technique called the "Bellows Breath" which is an exercise from pranayama yoga called Bhastrika. [194] The technique is done sitting in a comfortable chair or recliner that doesn't allow you to fall out. In this technique you draw a breath in sharply through your nostrils with such intensity that they become flared. This is done several times at a rate of about once per second. Don't worry about exhaling; just let it go and your body will exhale naturally. Do not do more than four breaths like this on your first few attempts. Eventually you can work your way up to ten breaths.

Graham Nicholls also gives his own variation of "Bellows Breath" that he developed from Baker's technique: [195]

Kneel with your hands held in loose fists in front of you, elbows at your side.
Breathe in as forcefully as possible while pushing your arms up above your head and straightening your elbows and opening your hands widely.
When your lungs are full, bring your arms down, exhaling forcefully until your elbows touch your rib cage and your lungs are empty.
Repeat this for twenty cycles, then rest with your hands on your lap, opened upward for thirty seconds to two minutes before repeating.

Nicholls devotes a lot of attention to other breathing techniques for OBEs. In one, he suggests you slow your breath progressively by breathing in deeply, then breathing out deeply, slowing each breath as you relax your body. He also suggests, as do other authors, that you count the number of seconds (as

opposed to heartbeats) for each breath to gauge how well you're doing. [196]

Darryl Berry has one of the best sections on OBE breathing exercises in his book. [197] He recommends inhaling to the count of 4, hold the lungs full to the count of 2, exhale to the count of 4, and hold the lungs empty to the count of 2. He calls this the "bread and butter" of his practice sessions. He suggests several ways to focus your mind during this breathing, such as counting backward from 50 to 1 with each complete 4-2-4-2 breath cycle.

Michael Raduga suggests a "Hyperventilation Technique" in which you take several dozen quick and deep breaths, which can cause an immediate exit. [198]

From a science point of view, deep breathing at the beginning may oxygenate your blood for laying down better memories, whereas slow rhythmic breathing may bring you closer to simulating a near-death experience (NDE).

[189] Psychic Breathing: Cosmic Vitality From the Air , Robert Crookall, The Aquarian Press, 1979.

[190] Astral Projection , Oliver Fox, University Books, 1962.

[191] Astral Projection: A Beginner's Guide , Richard Craze, Hodder Headline plc, 1996, pg. 71.

[192] Out of Body Experiences , Akhena, Channel Soleil Publications, 2013, pg. 140.

[193] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 251.

[194] Practical Techniques of Astral Projection, Dr. Douglas M. Baker, The Aquarian Press, pg. 74.

[195] Navigating the Out-of-Body Experience , Graham Nicholls, Llewellyn Publications, 2012, pg. 202 – 203.

[196] Navigating the Out-of-Body Experience , Graham Nicholls, Llewellyn Publications, 2012, pg. 180-181.

[197] Travel Far , Darryl E. Berry Jr, Next Density Publishing, pg. 140-157.

[198] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 247.

# **Chapter 65.** Sound Technologies and Binaural Beats

When Robert Monroe had his first few OBEs, he thought he was ill or going mad. [199] After doctors and psychiatrists told him he was healthy in both mind and body, he looked for other explanations for his OBEs. The only thing that had changed in his life was that he had recently been experimenting with binaural beats to see if he could enhance learning.

Binaural beats are an interesting phenomenon in sound technology: If you play one uniform tone in one ear under headphones, and play a slightly different tone in the other ear, your brain interprets the two tones as one sound, but with a "beat." Even though each ear is hearing a steady sound, the brain "hears" a repeated beat that sounds like "woo-woo-woo-woo" in your head.

Through years of complex experimentation and sound engineering, he learned that this strange artifact trained the brain hemispheres to synchronize, which had a number of benefits. To make a long story short, he started The Monroe Institute (TMI) in Virginia, and developed a sound technology he called Hemi-Sync, short for "brain hemisphere synchronization." Today, TMI uses hemi-sync in classes and CDs to help people achieve altered states of consciousness, as well as OBEs. Many of these recordings are guided hypnosis CDs, guided meditations, and even music with built in hemi-sync sounds called "Metamusic." After Monroe's passing, TMI continued to develop new sound technologies. For example, "SAM" an acronym for Spacial Angle Modulation that works on a different principle.

Other teachers also use binaural beats to help induce OBEs. William Buhlman, who teaches OBE classes at TMI, has hypnosis recordings with its own binaural beats. One is called Waves of Light , and the other is The Power of 7 . Both are very

good. Jurgen Ziewe, author of Multidimensional Man has an audio track called The Far Countries , and it's probably my favorite track for sound-assisted meditation. It has no hypnosis; just sounds and "Aums." Graham Nicholls, author of Navigating the Out of Body Experience, also has a product he calls Infraliminal Sounds. I haven't used it, so I'm not qualified to say how good it is. His credentials are solid, so it's probably very good too.

You can find many other options as well on the Internet. Sites like YouTube (youtube.com) offer a rich variety of options. There are even apps available for your phone, tablet and computer to create your own binaural beats, such as Gnaural.

The advantage of sound technology is that the brain's auditory cortex is pretty close to the TPJ and angular gyrus on both sides of the brain, so the influence is right where it needs to be.

[199] Journeys Out of the Body , Robert A. Monroe, Doubleday, 1977 edition, pg 23.

# Chapter 66. Sound and Light Machines

I'll admit I'm a bit ignorant when it comes to sound and light machines. I've never used most of them. Some of these machines, such as the Pandora Star, are designed to put you into an altered state of consciousness by strobing your closed eyelids with sequenced flashes of light. I've tried the Pandora Star briefly (about a half hour) and didn't like it.

Other machines, like Nova Dreamer, REM Dreamer, and Remee are dream masks that use technology to track your eyes at night. When they determine your body has gone into REM sleep, they send flashes of light through your closed eyelids, signaling you to become lucid.

Some people use phone apps to randomly remind you throughout your day (while you're awake) to check whether you are dreaming. Once this becomes a habit, you're more likely to find yourself in a lucid dream. Then you transition the lucid dream to an OBE, as covered in chapter 62.

I wish I could say more about these technologies, but I haven't experimented with them enough to have an educated opinion.

# Chapter 67. Vitamins, Supplements and Probiotics

I've done a fair amount of research on various vitamins, supplements, herbs and probiotics and their effect on OBEs and lucid dreams. In many cases I've tried these myself to see their effectiveness.

**Dream Recall and Vitamin B-6**

As far as I know, most vitamins do not enhance your ability to induce OBEs, but there is an important connection here. As I said in chapter 60 (on keeping a dream journal) vitamin B-6 seems to enhance dream recall, which in turn is linked to lucid dreaming, which is linked to OBEs. I've done some experimentation with vitamin B-6, and I recommend you either:

Take a "Super B Complex" or "B-Stress" vitamin supplement that has a decent amount of B-6 every day. I have pretty good dream recall if I just take this every day and keep a dream journal.
Take a larger dose Vitamin B-6 tablet, but never more than 100mg per day or it may cause liver damage. Don't take B-6 every day. Take it a few days, then stop cold turkey for another few, then go back on it again. For some reason, I seem to have better dream recall when I'm either starting or stopping vitamin B-6. If I'm on it too long or off it too long, the effect is nullified. So a "Super B Complex" is a better way to go.

I currently use a B complex that has 50mg of B-6, 50mg Thiamine (B-1), 50mg Riboflavin (B-2), 100mg Niacin, 100mg B-12, 400mcg Folic Acid, 100mcg Biotin, and 75mg Choline, plus a few others.

**Vitamin D and Sunlight**

Does vitamin D inhibit OBEs? There's some evidence

to suggest it might.

In my first book, I wrote that "Strangely, I usually have fewer OBEs in July. I suspect that's because July is when I have the least amount of time to practice." [200] Making time to practice might be only part of the problem. The other problem might be more normal levels of vitamin D in my body. Let me explain.

Vitamin D is very important for good health, but according to a 2011 study, 41.6% of adults in the US are vitamin D deficient. [201] Many scientific articles associate vitamin D deficiency with sleep problems that affect sleep quality and quantity, including broken sleep. [202] And broken sleep is often associated with OBEs.

Vitamin D is manufactured by the body from cholesterol when your skin is exposed to sunlight, which means it is a hormone as well as a vitamin. Our ancient ancestors spent a lot of time outdoors, hunting, fishing, and farming for food, which means the human body evolved to require relatively high levels of vitamin D. Even a hundred years ago, most people spent many hours a day outdoors farming, which triggered solid vitamin D production. Today, many of us have a vitamin D deficiency because we spend most of our time indoors, out of the sun.

Even if you spend more time outdoors, there's a lot less sunlight in the winter. Where I live, days are very short in the winter [203] and like most people, I'm trapped behind a desk for most of it. Even if I do go outside, November is the cloudiest month, averaging just 5 sunny days (6 partly sunny) and December is about the same.

On the other hand, July is the height of summer in the Northern hemisphere, which means the sun is strong and the days are long. People usually don't have school commitments in July and take vacations from work, which often means they spend

more time outdoors, exposing their bodies to sunlight, triggering the production of vitamin D.

So maybe I have fewer OBEs in July because normal levels of vitamin D make OBEs harder to achieve. Conversely, vitamin D deficiency may make OBEs a little bit easier.

It's interesting to note that Michael Raduga, the champion of WBTB and broken sleep, also comes from a place pretty far North of the equator—Siberia—which also has long dark winters, so maybe many of his "Phase" experiences are also aided by a vitamin D deficiency.

**WARNING** : Don't try to deliberately starve your body of vitamin D for the sake of OBEs because that can lead to serious health problems like depression.

All I'm saying is that if you take a vitamin D supplement, it may artificially reduce or inhibit your ability to induce OBEs.

I've experimented taking vitamin D supplements. In general, I really like how vitamin D makes me feel, but I definitely feel more "otherworldly" and OBE-prone when I'm not taking it.

### Raw Potato Starch for More Productive Sleep and Longer REM

In chapter 6 I talked about our 90-minute sleep cycles and how nREM sleep is like laundering your brain, but that's not the end of the story. Research suggests that taking raw potato starch before bed makes nREM sleep more productive (and therefore shorter). [204] It's like adding more detergent to the laundry. It gets your brain clean in less time. Technically, it acts as a probiotic, feeding the bacteria in your gut that produce short chain fatty acids (SCFAs) which are used by the body to clean the brain. The bacteria produce two cytokines that regulate sleep.

Since the length of the sleep cycles doesn't change, when you decrease the amount of nREM sleep, you therefore increase the length of REM sleep, which means you have longer dreams.

When I've taken raw potato starch before bed I wake up in the morning feeling more refreshed, and I have longer and more vivid dreams.

You can buy it in almost every grocery store in the baking aisle, or buy it online. What I recommend is one or two tablespoons of raw (uncooked) potato starch, dissolved in a glass of water. You may want to add a flavor squirt like Mio or Tang to mask its chalky flour-like taste.

**Mugwort for Lucidity**

The herb mugwort (Artemisia Vulgaris) has a long history of medicinal uses. Many people call it the "dreaming herb" because it can cause strange dreams, flying dreams, and sometimes lucidity. In the past some people have associated it with witchcraft, but there's nothing magical about it. It's just ordinary chemistry. You can buy it from herbalists, new age stores, and some health food stores.

I've tried mugwort a few times. The first time I boiled one tablespoon of dried mugwort leaves in a quart of water as a tea. It had no effect. The second time, I doubled the amount and used two tablespoons to a quart of water. It gave me vivid nightmares, but in all fairness, they bordered on lucidity. The third time I followed the same formula, but once again it seemed to have no effect. Many people report success with mugwort for lucid dreaming, so try it yourself.

To use mugwort, boil a quart of water, then add a tablespoon or two of dried mugwort leaves to water and make your own herbal tea. It helps to use a tea infuser ball, but you can also use a coffee filter and tie it at the top. Let the tea steep for at

least 30 minutes before you drink it, and only drink it immediately before bed. It has a strange but not offensive taste.

**Caffeine**

I sometimes drink a caffeine drink (like a can of soda) in the evening, and it doesn't keep me from sleeping. However, I've noticed extra lucidity and can often remember my dreams better when I do. For what it's worth, Keith Morgan says to avoid caffeine, [205] but my experience is just the opposite.

Michael Raduga suggests you keep a cup of coffee or energy drink like Red Bull or Monster by your bedside. When you wake up in the middle of the night between sleep cycles, drink the caffeine drink and go back to sleep immediately. He claims to have a 60% success rate with this technique. [206]

**Caffeine with Melatonin for Lucidity**

Melatonin is a natural brain hormone you can buy in the United States as a supplement. [207] Some people take it with caffeine right before bed for OBEs. The caffeine stimulates consciousness and the melatonin promotes sleep, and thus, conscious sleep.

Consult your doctor before taking melatonin. Start out with 3mg right before bed, but beware: It may make you unusually drowsy the next morning. Never take melatonin before driving a car or operating heavy machinery, because it will make you sleepy. If 3mg doesn't affect you, bump it to 10mg. If 10mg doesn't affect you, try 20mg, but don't go higher than that. If 10mg hits you too hard, you can also try a smaller dose. I haven't experimented much with melatonin, but friends have.

**Caffeine plus Alcohol for Lucidity**

I've never been much of an alcohol drinker. I drink

maybe one alcoholic drink a month, if that. Some people say you can sometimes induce OBEs by drinking both a caffeine drink and an alcoholic drink right before bed. I've never tried it, so all I can report is what people say. Some research indicates that alcohol and barbiturates both suppress OBEs, [208] but Akhena insists that a moderate amount of alcohol is not a problem. [209]

**Galantamine and Choline for Lucidity**

Galantamine is a drug used to treat Alzheimer's disease because it enhances memory, but some people use it to induce lucid dreams. It is an acetylcholinesterase inhibitor (AChEl), which means it blocks the breakdown of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, a molecule that supports memory. I've tried taking it twice and didn't notice an effect. Some say galantamine produces poor quality lucid dreams, but it's better than none. Consider it a way to jump start the process. You can buy it as a commercial product called Galantamind which combines galantamine with vitamin B-5 and choline, a nutrient from which the brain synthesizes acetylcholine. There's also a product called Galantamind Plus that also adds a few other vitamins, including B-6 and B-12.

It's best to take one galantamine tablet in the middle of the night when you wake up before one of your last sleep cycles of the night. If you take it too early, you might have problems getting to sleep.

**Huperzine-A with Vinpocetine**

Daniel Kelley recommends Huperzine-A with Vinpocetine for OBEs. [210] Like Galantamine, it is used to treat Alzheimer's disease and is an acetylcholinesterase inhibitor that inhibits the b reakdown of acetylcholine . Do **not** take Huperzine-A if you're on beta-blockers to decrease heart rate because it may

reduce the effectiveness of common pulmonary and cardiovascular drugs. [211] I've never tried it because I'm on a beta blocker.

**Dream Leaf**

Another product lucid dreaming is Dream Leaf. Each bottle contains several red pills and blue pills. These are NOT the same pills as the movie The Matrix, but the manufacturer apparently wants that mystique. The pills contain Mugwort, 5-HTP, Huperzine-A, Alpha GPC, Choline, and Bitartrate . To use Dream Leaf, take one red pill before bed. Next, use the WBTB technique (chapter 57.) When your alarm goes off six hours into sleep, take the blue pull to induce lucidity and go back to sleep. I've tried Dream Leaf a couple times, and had mixed results.

**Mexican Calea (Calea ternifolia)**

Mexican Calea, also known as calea ternifolia or "dream herb" is a species of flowering plant in the aster family. It's sometimes used in Mexico to treat intestinal problems like diarrhea. People also use it to induce lucid dreams and to remember their dreams because it's a natural oneirogen (it enhances dream-like states of consciousness). The leaves are smoked or brewed into a tea. It has a bitter taste, and can have some undesirable side-effects like nausea and vomiting. I've never tried it.

**African Dream Root (Silene undulata)**

Another oneirogen used to induce lucid dreams is African Dream Root. The Xhosa people of Southern Africa consider it a sacred plant and use it in their ceremonies. Like Mexican Calea, it's commonly cut up and brewed into a tea. I've never tried this either, but I have friends who have.

**African Dream Herb (Entada rheedii)**

African Dream Herb is a large woody nut / seed about one inch in diameter. It's also known as snuff box sea bean and cacoon vine (in Jamaica). It's used in traditional African medicine to induce "vivid" dreams (although I haven't heard of it specifically used for lucid dreaming) and to communicate with spirits. It's common in many coastal places of the world, but not the Americas. The inner meat of the nut can be chopped up and eaten or ground into a fine powder and added to tobacco which is smoked just before sleep.

**L-Theanine**

L-Theanine is an amino acid found mostly in tea leaves. You can buy it as a supplement from health food stores to promote relaxation and stress relief without drowsiness. Unlike Mexican Calea, there are no known bad side-effects. Some people claim to induce OBEs by taking L-Theanine along with caffeine. I've tried it a couple times, but it never induced lucidity.

**Cannabis / Marijuana**

Some people claim cannabis (marijuana) encourages OBEs (I've never used it). Susan Blackmore had her first (and very lengthy) OBE after smoking marijuana. [212] I'm not aware of any other authors who claim to use it for OBEs. Marijuana is considered a mild hallucinogen, so it interferes with normal processing of the TPJ. But as with all hallucinogens, can you really trust what you experience?

**Warning**

Before you take any of these supplements, talk to your doctor about drug interactions and side-effects. Research the supplements and how they may affect you. Most of these over-the-

counter supplements are not regulated by the FDA or other government organizations. In other words: PLEASE BE CAREFUL AND DON'T DO ANYTHING RISKY or stupid. OBEs are not worth risking your health.

[200] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, pg. 218.

[201] Prevalence and correlates of vitamin D deficiency in US adults , Forrest and Stuhldreher, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21310306

[202] For example, https://www.thesleepdoctor.com/2016/02/26/low-on-vitamin-d-sleep-suffers/

[203] On the Winter Solstice in Brainerd, MN days are only 8 hours, 35 minutes long; about 7 hours shorter than on the Summer Solstice.

[204] For example, http://searchingsleep.com/resistance-starch-and-sleep/

[205] Easy Astral Projection , Pentacle Enterprises, Keith Morgan, 1992, pg. 15. "Never drink tea or coffee or caffeine related drinks such as coca cola."

[206] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 155 – 156.

[207] Melatonin is considered a prescription drug in some countries (e.g. Germany), but may be purchased over the counter in the United States.

[208] Seeing Myself , Susan Blackmore, Robinson, 2017, pg. 196.

[209] Out of Body Experiences , Akhena, Channel Soleil Publications, 2013, pg. 47.

[210] Behind the Veil , Daniel Kelley, 2018, chapter 5, Dream Recall.

[211] http://www.naturallivingcenter.net

[212] Seeing Myself , Susan Blackmore, Robinson, 2017, pg. 293.

# Chapter 68. Aromatherapy and Scented Oils for OBEs

Many metaphysical stores and herbalists sell scented aromatherapy oils for astral projection. How does that work?

According to scientists, the sense of smell is the oldest of the five senses and was the first to evolve. The smell receptors in the nose are "wired" directly to a primitive part of the brain called the olfactory bulb. Since it's the most primitive sense and has a hardwired shortcut into the brain, it can instantly alter your mood, state of mind, and focus. That's why churches and temples burn incense. It's also why many casinos spray vanilla and other scents into the air at their entrances. You can harness that mood-altering force for OBEs.

In chapter 15 I talked about how some writers need a "writing ritual" to focus their brain on the task of writing, and how to develop a similar ritual for OBEs. Essential oils provide a quick "plug-in" for the brain to assume an OBE ritual: you replace the ordinary day-to-day smells with the scented oils and they focus your mind on the task of inducing an OBE.

So what's in these scented oils for astral projection? Many occultists, book stores, and herbalists guard their formulas and ingredient lists carefully, so it's not easy to tell what's in them. The good news is that it probably doesn't matter, as long as it focuses your brain on the task of inducing OBEs. In other words, as long as you learn to associate those smells with the task of inducing OBEs. Here are some of the common ingredients:

Cinnamon – to improve your focus
Frankincense – for expanded awareness
Myrrh – to boost your concentration

Lavender – for relaxation
Ylang-ylang – for deep relaxation
Sandalwood – for mental clarity
Lemon oil – to enervate your mind
Rosewood – to calm emotions and release mental clutter
Jasmine – to encourage a sense of peace and calm
Mugwort – The dreaming herb we talked about in the previous chapter.
Rose oil or cinquefoil (potentilla) oil

To use the oils, apply a small amount of the oil directly to your skin before OBE attempts. I put a small amount on the back of my hands, but some people apply it to their "third eye" region, or even the back of their neck.

You can also use an oil diffuser, such as reed or stick diffuser for a more long-term effect, such as a special room set aside for OBEs. This is essentially just a small jar or cup with wooden reeds or sticks to wick the oil up from the jar, which creates a passive smell in the room. There are also electronic diffusers, but I don't like them as well.

Scented oils won't induce OBEs, but they may set the mood and improve your focus when making your OBE attempts.

# Chapter 69. The Pineal Gland, Contaminants and Boron

Seventeenth-century philosopher René Descartes thought the seat of the soul was the pineal gland, a tiny pinecone-shaped (hence its name) gland located in the center of the brain of almost all animals. [213] It's the only part of the brain that isn't separated into two halves.

Oliver Fox thought the pineal gland was one key to unlock OBEs, [214] and one of his three OBE techniques was called "The Pineal Doorway" in which you try to shrink your awareness to an infinitesimal size and move it into, and through, the pineal gland.

What do today's scientists know about the pineal gland? Its primary function is to produce melatonin, the hormone that makes you sleepy, which I talked about in chapter 67. When your eyes are deprived of sunlight (for example, when it's dark outside), the pineal gland produces more melatonin, which makes you sleepy. [215] Many people with sleep disorders have difficulty falling asleep because their bedroom isn't dark enough, or because their eyes are over-stimulated by artificial light, such as spending the night watching television or a computer, or staring into a phone or tablet. There have been cases where, due to tumors, doctors removed the pineal glands of patients. There was no loss of consciousness, and life goes on as normal, as long as they take melatonin supplements (sorry Descartes!)

Scientists also know that as we age, the pineal gland tends to collect calcium and fluoride deposits, which show up on brain x-rays. As with all mammals, the human brain has a special

blood filtration system known as the "blood-brain barrier" that prevents chemicals and toxins from getting into the brain. Oddly, the pineal gland is not subject to the blood-brain barrier, which is why calcium and fluoride make their way in.

Dr. Rick Strassman theorized the pineal gland can produce N,N-dimethyltryptamine—DMT [216]—a powerful but short-lived hallucinogen that occurs naturally in the human body (and most living organisms) in small quantities. Hallucinogens like LSD, psilocybin, and psilocin (the psychoactive agent in ayahuasca) all have chemical structures similar to DMT, but with other "features" to make them harder to eliminate from the body. Those features make psychedelic trips last much longer than pure DMT. DMT is an entheogen that has the same basic structure as a neurotransmitter, which allows it to pass through the blood-brain barrier. If Strassman is right, calcification of the pineal gland may inhibit naturally occurring "trippy" experiences like OBEs. [217]

The pineal gland synthesizes melatonin from an amino acid known as tryptophan. [218] You may know it from a well-known phenomenon where you get sleepy after you eat turkey. Turkey contains lots of tryptophan, which allows the pineal gland to produce more melatonin, which makes you sleepy.

For a normal sleep period, when the sun rises, sunlight enters through the closed eyelids and triggers the production of hormones associated with lucidity, and we become conscious. That's why we sleep more in the winter: the days are shorter, so the sun triggers this response later in the morning. Of course, all this was knocked off kilter when humans created artificial light.

Under ordinary circumstances, our bodies undergo a natural cycle of waking and sleeping: Throughout the day, our consciousness hormones are slowly depleted, which is why we're not as "sharp" in the evening as we are in the morning. At the end

of the day, our pineal gland ramps up production of melatonin, which makes us drowsy and we fall asleep. During sleep, we use up melatonin, until the next morning. It's all part of the natural circadian rhythm.

How does this fit in with OBEs?

For one thing, there is a correlation between OBEs and the time of day. Most OBEs are reported in the morning, favoring early morning. I suspect that's because our brains have both a high level of both melatonin and the hormones associated with lucidity then.

It may be difficult for the pineal gland to release melatonin or DMT into the bloodstream if it's clogged up with contaminants like calcium and fluoride. That means inducing OBEs might be easier when you're young and your pineal gland is less exposed to contaminants.

I recommend two things to minimize this effect: First, avoid drinking city water because it almost always contains fluoride. I live in a rural area, so I drink water pumped directly from the ground by a private well. If you live in a city, you can usually buy drinking water that's been filtered by reverse-osmosis, which removes the fluoride. Some people even buy special toothpaste that doesn't contain fluoride, but I think that's a little overboard.

Second, occasionally take a boron supplement to decalcify your pineal gland. Be careful not to overdo it, though, because calcium is a necessary nutrient. If you take a boron supplement more than four or five days in a row, your fingernails may start to get thin and break, which means your body isn't getting enough calcium, and that may lead to severe bone problems like osteoporosis, especially if you're getting up there in years.

For best results, you may want to take both boron and calcium supplements. The calcium will still fortify and strengthen

your bones, but the boron will keep it from accumulating in your pineal gland.

Again, I strongly recommend you do some research and talk to your doctor before you try boron. I've experimented with boron supplements, and they do seem to help my OBEs, as well as other psychic experiences. And yes, I've talked to my primary doctor about it.

213 While almost all animals have a pineal gland, there are a few notable exceptions like the hagfish (also known as "slime eels.") Even the hagfish has a structure that may be a "pineal equivalent."

214 Astral Projection , Oliver Fox, Citadel Press, 1979, pg. 100 – 102.

215 Older people often have problems sleeping. One possible cause is the calcification of the pineal gland, which might inhibit the release of melatonin into the bloodstream.

216 DMT: The Spirit Molecule , Rick Strassman, M.D., Park Street Press, 2001, Introduction, pg. xv.

217 Some people blame pineal gland calcification for diminished psychic abilities and take Boron supplements to decalcify it. Some conspiracy theorists say the government mandates fluoride in the water to inhibit people's psychic abilities.

218 It's interesting to note that tryptophan is chemically very similar to DMT, but without the hallucinations.

# Chapter 70. OBEs, Celibacy, Masturbation and the Sex Drive

Some people, especially those rooted in Taoist traditions, claim that OBE abilities in men are enhanced by celibacy, and abstaining from all forms of ejaculation (sex, masturbation, etc.). They say that releasing semen depletes "chi," "qi," or "lifeforce," (non-physical energy), an excess of which is essential for OBE work. [219] Even Carlos Castaneda wrote that sex depletes non-physical energy. First of all, I don't believe OBEs require a lot of non-physical energy, and second, I don't believe sex depletes chi. I tend to think that's just superstition passed down for generations. (However, psycho-physical exercises like Tai Chi, Qi Gong and similar "chi building" exercises can help you induce OBEs, but for other reasons.) What do the OBE experts say?

Robert Bruce calls out sexual arousal as a potential problem. He wrote that some people "worry that sex may drain the energy body and make projection more difficult until it has replenished itself. In my opinion, sex before a projection attempt has more positive than negative aspects to it. Sexual fulfillment greatly eases physical and mental tension by promoting energetic balance and deeper physical and mental relaxation." [220] The myth, he says, is most likely because people often have more sex at night before bed, which makes you fall asleep more quickly.

William Buhlman found that "a normal sex life does not interfere with OBEs. However, if you believe it will, then you have created your reality." [221]

Graham Nicholls wrote "As with all forms of immersion, those used by pre-technological cultures were designed to push the body to an extreme of some form so that the mind

would be free of chatter and mundane concerns. This results in mental clarity and a state akin to meditation or other practice designed to still the mind. It is also possible to experience some sense of this through physical endurance or sexual activity. For many people, orgasm is the only way that the chatter of the mind is dissolved temporarily. In practices such as some forms of Western Tantra, immersion in sexual intercourse and related practices can lead to transcendent states of awareness. Physical sex can actually be a useful technique for achieving OBEs." [222] Nicholls has a very good write-up about sex and OBEs, including the subject of "astral sex." [223]

Akhena wrote that a healthy sex life can be a positive factor for OBEs. She wrote, "Abstention is not useful and may even be a problem." [224] Salvatore Caesar Scordato suggested using masturbation as a way to achieve a deeper level of relaxation just prior to making an OBE attempt. [225]

Michael Raduga takes it a bit further and even includes a "Sex Technique" for achieving OBEs in which the practitioner "tries to feel the intimate sensations of the copulative act in as much detail as possible." [226] To me that seems counter-intuitive; it would be too much of a distraction. On the other hand (no pun intended!), most men can probably imagine sexual scenarios more vividly than normal OBE visualization techniques, due to years of practice!

Curiously, even though Sylvan Muldoon stressed the need for subconscious desire in general, he also wrote that sexual desire is a negative factor for inducing OBEs. [227] He insisted that sexual desire keeps you too focused on the physical body, making it harder to move away from it.

Among other things, orgasm releases endorphins, the

body's natural pain-killing hormone. Although non-addictive, endorphins act on the opiate receptors in the brain, and they have been known to induce hallucinations.

The bottom line is to not let your OBE attempts be wasted because you're too distracted by unfulfilled sexual desire. It's better to see it as a necessary function of the physical body, satisfy the body's need, and get on with your OBE attempt, undistracted.

[219] Behind the Veil , Daniel Kelley, 2018.

[220] Astral Dynamics , Robert Bruce, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1999, pg. 293 – 294.

[221] Buhlman posted this in response to a question in the "TMI Out of Body Experience Group" on Facebook, 13 Aug 2018.

[222] Navigating the Out-of-Body Experience , Llewellyn Publications, Graham Nicholls, pg. 85.

[223] ___, pgs. 116-118.

[224] Out of Body Experiences , Akhena, Channel Soleil Publications, 2013, pg. 49.

[225] You Can Fly , Salvatore Caesar Scordato, Kaleidoscope Books, 2015, pg 77.

[226] The Phase , Michael Raduga, obe4u.com, 2015, version 3.0, pg. 246.

[227] The Projection of the Astral Body , Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington, Weiser, 1929, Chapter 9, "Sexual Desire is a negative factor" pg. 181.

# Chapter 71. OBE Dietary Considerations

A lot of authors have theories about what works and what doesn't to induce OBEs, but that's only what works for them, not you. This especially applies to diet. D. Scott Rogo dedicated an entire chapter to "Astral Projection through Dietary Control" [228] which, he says, dates back at least to 1916. He calls it the "[Minnie] Keeler system" and credits amateur psychic investigator Prescott Hall for documenting it. The system, Rogo says, is this:

The student should begin by either fasting or cutting down food intake.
No food of any sort should be eaten just before an OBE attempt.
Overeating may bar any success at OBE travel.
No meat should be eaten during the training program.
The diet should consist mainly of fruits and vegetables.
Carrots are extremely beneficial.
Raw eggs are favorable to the diet and to OB release.
No nuts of any kind are to be eaten.
Peanuts are especially bad. (Peanuts aren't technically nuts, but belong to the pea family).
Liquids of all types are beneficial, but are not to be used in excess.

As far as I can recall, this is the only OBE book that mentions not eating nuts. What's so special about nuts? Many people become constipated when they eat nuts, and I've had friends tell me they can't induce OBEs if they're constipated. I've also had friends tell me they can't induce OBEs if they don't drink enough water, and lack of water also leads to constipation.

I think it all goes back to the bacteria in the gut. In chapter 67 I talked about how raw potato starch produces longer

REM sleep because it feeds bacteria in your gut. I think they influence OBEs more than anyone realizes.

The human body is a very complex ecosystem packed with not only human cells but also lots of other chemicals, hormones, nutrients, and bacteria. In fact, scientists in the UK recently discovered that we have more non-human DNA in our bodies than human DNA! [229] Normally, this ecosystem works just fine and we live normal "physical" lives, but if you tip some of those factors out of balance, OBEs may become more likely. You may need to experiment with some of the factors below until you tip the balance in favor of OBEs.

**The Effects of a Vegetarian Diet**

Like Rogo's book, many in the genre recommend a vegetarian diet to induce OBEs. [230] Graham Nicholls recently conducted an informal study of his OBE students in which he created an index value based on both frequency per month and duration of OBEs for a ten-month period. He found that students with plant-based diets consistently scored higher than those with non-plant-based diets.

Other experts say meat has no bearing on OBEs [231] unless you believe it does, in which case the placebo effect kicks in. So which is it? Scientists are now learning that there are multiple body types. They recently found that any given weight loss diet might work for one person but not another because different body types metabolize foods differently. Maybe the same holds true for OBEs: maybe a vegetarian diet benefits some body types and not others. I've always been a meat eater, and it's never affected my OBEs, but maybe other dietary considerations are more important than meat.

**Body Mass**

A vegetarian diet might work due to having less body mass: have you ever met an obese vegetarian? Or maybe they tend to eat more wheat gluten than meat eaters (more on that below.) I have reason to believe your weight or body mass may influence your ability to induce OBEs. Although it might be purely psychological, I have problems inducing OBEs if I get too heavy: 200 lbs (91 kg) seems to be my upper limit. More study is needed, of course, but I've generally found it much easier when my body weighs around 185 lbs (84 kg) or less. Since I'm 5'10" tall (177.8 cm), that makes my ideal body mass index 26.5. Maybe the brain chemicals and hormones needed for an OBE are too "spread out" if your body mass is too high, similar to how a small person becomes impaired by alcohol more quickly than a large person.

**Fasting, Meal Quantity, and Dinner Time**

Some spiritual traditions teach that fasting can help induce altered states of consciousness like OBEs. Sylvan Muldoon wrote that "Fasting is promotive of astral projection." [232] He believed that without food, the astral body needed to spend more time away from the physical "to collect a greater charge of cosmic energy to balance the loss." Other teachers dismiss this idea. [233] For example, Akhena writes, "There is no point in suggesting that you fast in order to increase your chances of leaving your body."

Several sources say that OBEs are more likely if you've only had a light meal for dinner. A friend told me he is much more likely to have OBEs if he doesn't eat anything after 3:00 p.m. (15:00). I've never tried this, but fasting after 3:00 p.m. may work for some people. It's certainly worth trying.

**Pasta and Wheat Gluten**

Unless you have gluten intolerance, you probably don't give much thought to eating foods that contain wheat gluten, like

bread, pasta, and some cereals, etc. I theorize that wheat gluten can actually help you induce OBEs.

If you've read my first book, Out of Body Experiences you may remember that I had my very first full-blown OBE after I came home late from the University and ate a big slab of lasagna: lots of wheat gluten right before bed. [234] That was my first tip-off.

A few years ago I read an article on how psilocybin, the psychoactive ingredient in "magic mushrooms," affects the brain, based on an analysis of brain blood flow. [235] It caught my interest because many people report OBE-like "trips" when they take psilocybin. The study correlated the "trips" with decreased blood flow to two areas of the brain, the medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) and posterior cingulate cortex (PCC). The lower the blood flow to these two regions, the harder you trip.

Then I read the Japanese study I mentioned in chapter 3 [236] which found that brain blood flow was decreased to the prefrontal cortex (PFC) during an OBE. Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman's books also suggest that profound states of consciousness are associated with a sudden drop in neural activity in the prefrontal cortex (PFC). [237]

Other articles suggest wheat gluten similarly reduces blood flow to the brain's frontal cortex. [238] Some people have a disease known as "wheat schizophrenia." Although I'm no expert, my understanding is that wheat gluten causes a drop in blood flow to the frontal cortex of people with the disease, causing a form of temporary schizophrenia, complete with hallucinations. If the patient is put on a strict gluten-free diet, their symptoms go away and they behave normally.

Based on all these things, my theory is that maybe excessive wheat gluten can cause a similar drop in the PFC of

ordinary people without the disease, causing an OBE as the result.

Daniel Kelley, author of Behind the Veil suggests a gluten-free diet, among his many recommendations, so take this discussion with a grain of salt. I don't recall any other OBE books mentioning gluten-free diets.

If you take all these things into consideration, you might be able to increase your OBEs by following these recommendations:

Eat only light meals, and nothing after 3:00 p.m.
Eat less meat, nuts, and cheese, and more carrots and other vegetables.
Eat more wheat gluten.
Maintain a healthy weight and stay trim.
Drink lots of water.

[228] Leaving the Body , D. Scott Rogo, Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1983, chapter 4.

[229] More than half your body is not human by James Gallagher, BBC News, Health, 10 April 2018.

[230] For example, Navigating the Out of Body Experience by Graham Nicholls, and Exploring Your Inner Reality by Jonas Ridgeway.

[231] For example, Out of Body Experiences by Akhena. William Buhlman also eats meat and even offers meat dishes at his OBE classes at The Monroe Institute.

[232] The Projection of the Astral Body, Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington, Weiser, 1929, pg 147.

[233] Out of Body Experiences , Akhena, Channel Soleil Publications, 2013, pg. 47.

[234] Out of Body Experiences , Robert Peterson, Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997, pg. 37 – 38.

[235] http://psychedelicfrontier.com/how-psilocybin-works-addition-by-subtraction/

[236] Measuring Brain Blood Flow Change by fNIRS during an Out-of-Body Experience , Yasuhiro Inui and Hideyuki Kokubo (2009).

[237] How Enlightenment Changes Your Brain , Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman, Penguin Random House, 2016, pg. 204. This drop in blood flow to the PFC may partly explain why OBEs are often experienced during an Near-Death Experience (NDE), especially in cases of cardiac arrest.

[238] For example, Wheat and Schizophrenia , Psychology Today, by Emily Deans, M.D. (March 28, 2011)

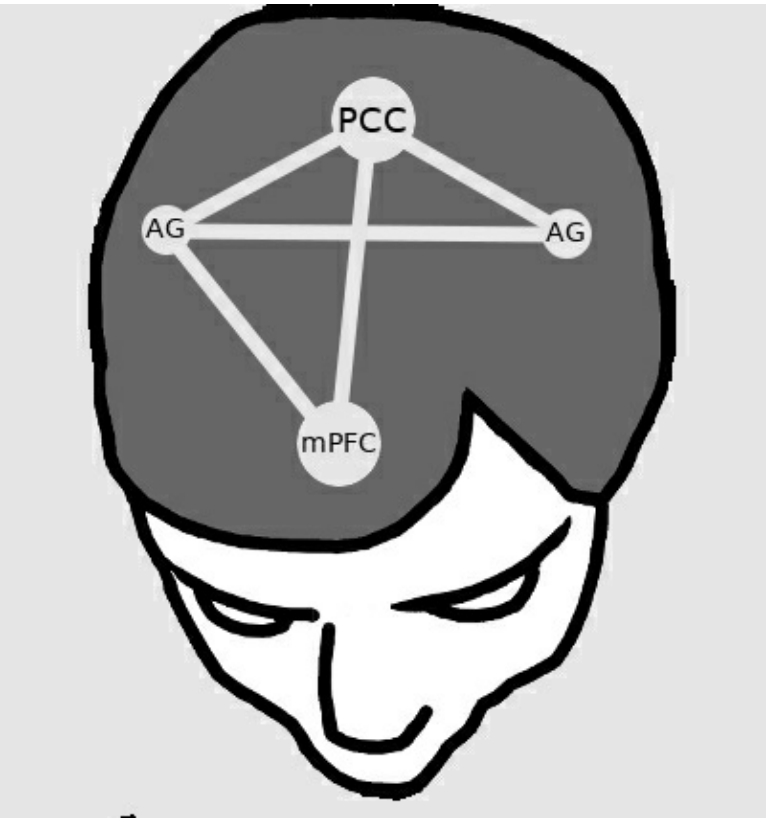
# Chapter 72. OBEs and the Default Mode Network

Neuroscientists still don't know what consciousness really is. Evidence seems to suggest that consciousness is not the result of neural activity in any particular region of the brain, but rather, the coherent activation of pathways of various brain networks. This came to light around 2001, when neuroscientists observed an interesting phenomenon on brain scans: when the subject was performing a specific task, like solving a math problem ("task positive thought") a certain network of neurons lit up in sequence, as if communicating with each other. They called this the Tast-Positive Network, or TPN.

Then they noticed something peculiar. While the subject sat idle and let his or her mind wander, they fully expected most of the brain activity to stop. Instead, a different network of neurons lit up in sequence. They called this the Default Mode Network (DMN), a term coined by neurologist Marcus Raichle. In computer terms, it's the brain's idle loop. Nearly any cognitively demanding functional task deactivates the DMN and reactivates the TPN. To solve a problem you basically activate your brain's "thinking" circuits (TPN) and deactivate the idle loop (DMN.) Interestingly, your brain spends more of its time (and energy consumption) in the DMN than the TPN.

The DMN processes "past" & "future" events (like mind wandering) while the TPN processes immediate events. That's interesting in light of the fact that with OBE techniques, you perform a very specific imaginary task (for example, visualization) while letting your mind go blank. It's almost like you're driving both the TPN and the DMN at the same time, or finding a delicate midway point.

The DMN is a network consisting mainly of these four brain regions/hubs: posterior cingulate cortex (PCC), medial pre-frontal cortex (mPFC), medial temporal lobe, and the angular gyrus (AG) (See figure 1). You may recall from chapter 3 that the right angular gyrus is the area of the brain's TPJ that Dr. Michael Persinger stimulated to get OBE-like sensations.




**(Figure 1. Default Mode Network - Waking Consciousness)**

It's interesting to note that the DMN is abnormally

active in a number of psychiatric disorders like schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and Alzheimer's disease. When you successfully treat these disorders, the DMN activity returns to normal.

### Psilocybin and the DMN

In the previous chapter I talked about how psilocybin has OBE-like effects. It reduces neural firing in key communication hubs, essentially disconnecting the posterior cingulate cortex (PCC) and medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC), both of which are hubs in the DMN. [239]

### Sedatives and the DMN

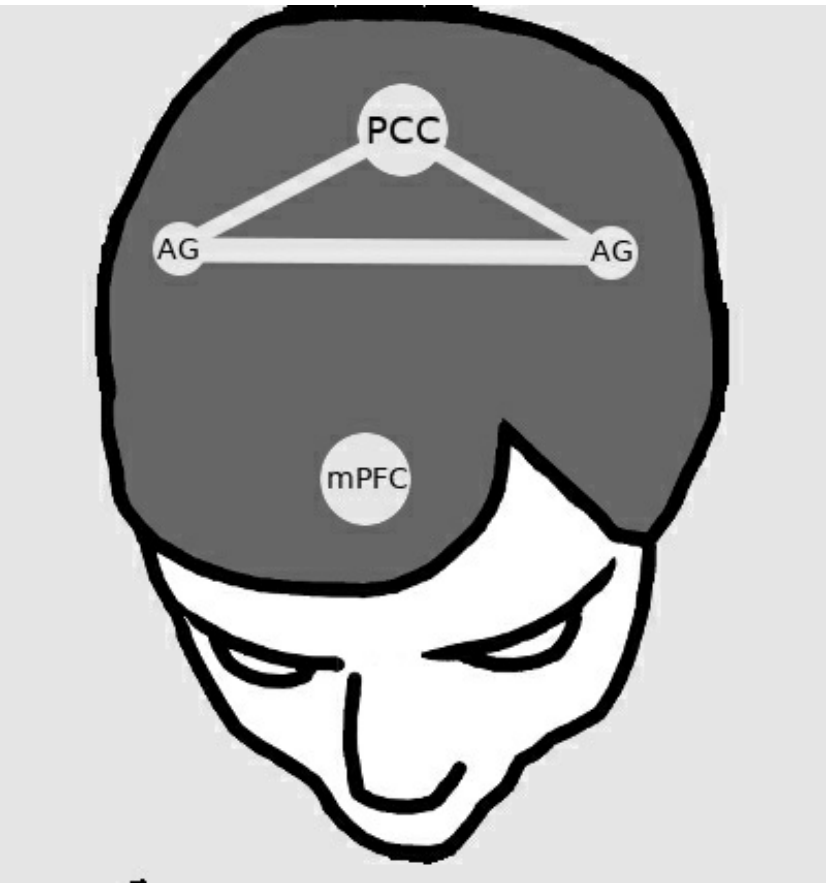
Scientists also found there was reduced functional connectivity in the Posterior Cingulate Cortex (PCC) in conscious sedation (when you take a sedative) compared to rest. So it seems like the presence or absence of activity in the DMN does not correspond to presence or absence of consciousness, however, reduced connectivity within the DMN may indicate it. [240]

### Meditation and the DMN

Meditation seems to decrease activity in the DMN in general, since it helps reduce anxiety and depression.

### Sleep and the DMN

In deep sleep, the brain apparently disconnects its DMN link to the medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) and strengthens its other links. (figure 2):




**(Figure 2. Default Mode Network - Deep Sleep)**

## OBEs and the DMN

How does this relate to the OBE? Neuroscientists have long thought that consciousness had something to do with the pre-frontal cortex (PFC). I theorize that during a conscious OBE, the DMN is in an unusual configuration, neither waking nor sleeping.

Perhaps the PCC or right angular gyrus are still communicating with the mPFC. More study is definitely needed.

One thing is for sure: With OBE techniques, you keep the "consciousness" circuits open in the brain while shutting down input from the senses. It seems as if we're keeping the connection to the mPFC active while also isolating it from the rest of the DMN.

[239] Robin Carhart-Harris & David Nutt (Imperial College London), 2012.

[240] https://neurowiki2012.wikispaces.com/DMN+in+consciousness

# Chapter 73. Odds and Ends and Superstitions

There are a few other common OBE practices I wanted to mention. Many of these things are recommended by the OBE experts, yet have no basis in science.

## Rocks and Crystals

Some people believe certain rocks and crystals can increase your ability to have OBEs. For example, some people keep a blue calcite crystal cluster by their bed to increase their OBEs. I've found no scientific evidence to support this belief. I've tried this myself and never seen an effect; my OBEs did not increase as a result. I'd like to chock this up to psychosomatic effects: if you believe it will help, it may help, but it's your belief and its influence over the subconscious doing all the work.

## Amulets and Talismans

The same applies to amulets and talismans: special objects imprinted with magical symbols or spells. They work insofar as you subconsciously believe they will. If that's what it takes to motivate your subconscious, do it. It's very much akin to the discussion we had in chapter 15 on rituals.

## Vortexes

Some people believe in energy vortexes; places where the psychic energy is stronger or magnified. As with rocks and crystals, I've found no scientific evidence to support this claim. In winter of 2018 I spent four months in Sedona, Arizona. I lived within walking distance of the Cathedral Rock vortex. I went

hiking almost every day, and visited vortexes frequently, often stopping there to meditate. I had a few more OBEs than normal that winter, but that's probably due to the change of location, the unfamiliar and slightly uncomfortable bed, and all things we've talked about before.

## Mudras

Mudras are special hand positions used for meditation. Very few OBE authors recommend them, but one is Darryl Berry, who has an excellent section on it. [241] I haven't taken the time to research mudras, so I'm not really qualified to give an opinion. Part of me wants to believe mudras won't work because they require a little bit of body tension, which is counterproductive to inducing OBEs. On the other hand, using them might be similar to the slow physical movements we talked about in chapter 3, like Tai Chi, that can build up neural activity in the PFC before dropping it. I'd encourage readers to do their own research and make their own decisions.

## Two Biggest Stumbling Blocks to OBE

In my opinion, the two biggest stumbling blocks to achieving an OBE are fear and complacency. OBEs may be scary or intimidating, at least until you're used to them, but you shouldn't let fear stop you. Work through that fear, as we talked about in chapter 8. Once you've worked through the fear, your biggest enemy is complacency. Don't get into a rut where you stop practicing, or practice halfheartedly. Don't accept "ordinary life." Don't get discouraged or pessimistic about OBEs. It will happen when the time is right.

## The Biggest Aid to OBE

The biggest aid to getting out of body is persistence. Be persistent. Keep at it. Never give up. Hopefully in this book, I've given you lots of techniques to try, lots of conditions to tweak, lifestyle changes to make, habits to form, and lots of options. Keep trying different techniques and practice conditions until you get positive results. Until then, keep at it like a pit bull.

[241] Travel Far , Darryl E. Berry Jr, Next Density Publishing, 2015, pg. 117 – 121.

# **Chapter 74.** Putting It All Together

Right now you probably feel overwhelmed. I've thrown a lot of information at you: OBE tips, techniques, eating and sleeping habits, supplements, and best practices. It may seem like you could spend every waking hour of every day just writing down dreams, doing affirmations, meditating, performing reality checks, reading OBE books, listening to OBE music, energy bouncing, and of course, exit techniques, but who has the time? Your life is already full to the brim with school, work, job, and family. How do you fit it all in?

You fit OBEs into your life like everything else: you prioritize. The more time you devote to OBE-related activities, the more likely you'll be successful. You can't go into this halfheartedly or you'll fail. Just do your best with what you've got. Here's one way to structure your days:

**Weekdays**

When you wake up, before you get out of bed, try to remember what you were just dreaming. Try to pull out as many little details as you can. Then sit up and jot a few keywords or notes into your phone or tablet's notes app, or on paper in a dream log.

While you're still groggy, perhaps while relieving yourself on the toilet, close your eyes and do some affirmations and labeling. For example, "I'm an out-of-body explorer. OBEs are easy for me." Repeat this over and over at least ten times.

Take 20 minutes to do a morning meditation. I do mine before I shower, eat breakfast, or get ready for work, but after some caffeine. Just try to blank your mind as much as you can without

losing lucidity. I do this siting up on a couch or recliner. I set a second alarm on my phone to make sure I don't fall asleep again.

Throughout the day, frequently pause to set the strongest possible intention to have an OBE. Intention is a demand given to your subconscious: I **will** have an OBE tonight.

Throughout the day, stop and do reality checks as often as possible. Do this every time you open the refrigerator. Ask yourself, "Does this make sense?" and "Am I dreaming right now?" Don't pay this lip service. Really question it.

Set up a trigger mechanism or two: "The next time I find myself at the University, I'm going to question whether I'm dreaming." or "Whenever I see a dog, I'm going to check if it's a dream."

Stop the glorification of "busy" and take some time to just daydream, read a book, or listen to some instrumental music, and try to visualize the notes floating in the air as it plays.

Whenever you're stopped at a traffic light, pretend for literally just a few seconds that you're weightless, flying joyfully out-of-body. Think to yourself, "Yes, that's what I want: an OBE."

Take mid-afternoon naps if you can afford the time. If not, no worries.

Don't overeat or eat heavy meals past 3:00 p.m. unless it's wheat-based, right before bed.

If you have free time in the evening, take some time to meditate to some binaural beats while wearing headphones.

Watch less television and play more video games or VR.

Before you go to bed, take a nightly "Super B Complex" vitamin.

Once in a while before bed, take one of the supplements I recommended in chapter 67 to see what works for you: mugwort, raw potato starch, galantamine, etc.

Just before bed, lie down on your back, raise your hands in the air to form a circle and spend 30 seconds doing energy circulation around your arms.

Lower your arms and try to see how quickly and completely you can relax your entire body.

Take another 30 seconds to do energy circulation up your spine and down your front: the microcosmic orbit from chapter 48.

Imagine yourself the next morning remembering your dreams and writing them down. Make a pact with yourself to remember them.

Spend another 30 seconds to just imagine you are gently rocking and floating inside your body.

Tell yourself firmly that you're going to have an OBE tonight, and it's very important.

Set up a subconscious reminder. Tell yourself, "I've got to remember to become lucid five hours from now, while I'm sleeping."

Once in a while before bed, try a direct technique, or try watching yourself fall asleep.

When you wake up in the middle of the night between sleep cycles, reaffirm that you want to have an OBE, and as you drift back down into sleep, imagine you're swaying. Optionally, slam an energy drink and go back to sleep.

**Weekends**

Whenever obligations permit, set your alarm for 6 hours past the time you go to bed. When it goes off, stay up a bit, then go back to bed as per the WBTB technique from chapter 57.

If possible, sleep in late. Every time you wake up after, say, 5:00 a.m., try not to move, but if it's too late and you moved, roll to your back. Then perform one or two of the direct exit techniques from part 2. If they don't work after a few minutes, make a firm resolution to have an OBE, then go back to sleep again. Repeat this sleep-try-sleep-try over and over until you're either successful or you're too restless and can't stay in bed any longer.

If you have an OBE, write it down in your OBE journal.

Don't get discouraged or dwell on failures or how long it's taking to achieve an OBE. Just tell yourself you'll do better next time and remind yourself that you'll never give up until you have another OBE.

It doesn't take a lot of time and effort to induce OBEs; just a few minutes every day. You need to be persistent and patient, and it helps to obsess about it.

One more thing: don't worry if you have a slump. Slumps happen to everybody. Just stay positive and be persistent. Tenacity pays.

# **Chapter 75.** When All Else Fails: A Formula for OBE Success

Over the years, I've noticed a fun and unexpected scenario in which I consistently induce OBEs, even during a slump. I'd like to share it with you on the hope that you can do this too when all else fails. This technique involves the cooperation of friends or family, for reasons that will soon become apparent. Here's what I do:

Throughout the week, I obsess on having an OBE. I ingrain it firmly in my subconscious. I firmly set an intention to have an OBE and reinforce it with affirmations, then stop to remind myself often throughout each day.

On Saturday, I take a break from thinking about OBEs and give my subconscious time off. I go to a friend or relative's house for a party. It's upbeat and there's no stress. I eat a few too many snacks and have a few alcoholic drinks in the early evening (often it's slowly sipping a glass of white wine, but I usually don't drink beer), but about 7:00 p.m. (19:00) I quit snacking and switch to water or a can of soda with caffeine.

In the evening I engage in lively conversation. We joke, laugh, and play games late into the night; card games like five hundred, golf (the card game), cribbage, canasta, hand and foot, "oh hell," or strategy games like Dominion, Puerto Rico, and Tigris and Euphrates. In other words, my brain does overtime playing games.

I stay up well past my bedtime playing games. I go to bed sometime between midnight and 1:00 a.m. instead of my usual 10:30 p.m. (22:30). I make my way to the guest bedroom, which is pitch black due to having no windows, thick curtains, or in the

wintertime when it's extra dark outside.

Since the bed is not my own, I'm just slightly uncomfortable. It's smaller than my normal bed, so I don't roll around or move much during the night. Nonetheless, I sleep well.

Sunday morning I may get up to pee, but return to bed. There are no deadlines, so I stay in bed and focus on an OBE. I roll to my back and make my first OBE attempt. I imagine floating inside my body and narrow my consciousness to a single-minded focus. I'm often unsuccessful the first try: I'm too tired. I give up, roll to my side, and allow myself to fall asleep again.

After that sleep cycle, I wake up totally relaxed, content, and refreshed, but I stay in bed. I roll to my back, but otherwise don't move much. I immediately try again for an OBE, starting with imagined floating and all. Now it's mid-morning; a couple hours past when I normally get up. On a normal weekday, I'd be up before 6:00 a.m., but now it's 7:30 a.m. or 8:30 a.m.

This time I imagine my entire body is swinging, rushing forward and backward, like I'm doing sit-ups in bed. Either that or I visualize a swinging object or grab a hypnopompic object and take control of it, causing it to swing. As I do this, I simultaneously eliminate all thoughts and narrow my focus as much as possible. I don't think about anything; I'm totally focused on imagining my body swaying or the object swinging.

After several minutes, the imagined sensations of bowing or swinging my body become very real, and I feel weightless. I let the momentum of the motion swing me fully out-of-body, until I'm at least 15 feet (5 meters) away from it. Then I open my (non-physical) eyes. I'm in an OBE and free to go where I want. That's it.

I'm not sure why this always seems to work for me. Perhaps it's the unfamiliar bed. Perhaps it's a combination of overtaxing my brain the night before, then "over-laundering" it in the morning with too much sleep. I suspect it's the combination of many of the factors I talked about in the book. Regardless, it seems like "the perfect storm" for OBEs and almost always works for me.

If you're struggling to achieve an OBE, try this formula and it may work for you too.

# **Chapter 76.** The Future of OBE research

What does the future have in store for OBE research? Progress is being made in several different directions and it all seems very promising.

Neuroscientists are discovering exciting new things about the human brain and how it works. Scientists have designed equipment that can study your brain patterns and determine the contents of your dreams, at least partly. They have artificial intelligence (AI) computers that can learn what brain patterns correspond to particular mental images, thoughts and feelings. They also have brain implants to enhance memory recall. Scientists could have a major breakthrough at any moment, and with it, a new understanding of how our brains formulate the "story of experience" which could lead us to new technologies.

Another positive direction is the study of psychedelics. Slowly but surely, the world is accepting marijuana use, which, like other hallucinogens, has the potential to loosen our tight grip on the physical senses. There are already religious organizations that allow their members to legally use substances like ayahuasca in sacred ceremonies. At the same time, governments around the world are starting to loosen their restrictions on the study of some schedule 1 (class 1) drugs. So it's getting easier for scientists and medical doctors to synthesize and study consciousness expanding substances like DMT, psilocybin, and MDMA (ecstasy), which has enormous potential to help victims of terminal cancer, PTSD, and other ailments, as well as having implications for OBEs. Drugs should never be seen as a long-term solution for OBEs, but sometimes we need to take more drastic measures to break out of our habitual brain patterns or "ruts."

As a computer guy, I'm even more excited about the possibilities for Virtual Reality. We already know that playing video games increases your chances for having OBEs, but VR takes it to the next level. It feeds your physical senses with false data, and forces an artificial "story of experience" into your TPJ. If you do this enough, the TPJ ought to learn to accept major paradigm shifts with ease, and in theory, that should make OBEs easier. The question is whether it remains securely locked on the physical senses or whether it will have the same impact on "inner events." Based on how video games seem to encourage OBE susceptibility, I suspect the TPJ doesn't care. Even if it stays locked onto the senses, new inventions might help us break out of that.

Today VR gear is expensive and cumbersome to use, but every year it becomes cheaper and more within reach of the average consumer. In the end, demand for commercially viable VR hardware, games and applications will drive the market, which will open the doors for VR applications designed for OBE. I look forward to exploring these new technologies and maybe even helping develop them.

# **Chapter 77.** Conclusions

A few hundred years ago, there were really only two economic classes: the super-rich ruling class and super-poor peasants. Science, technology and the industrial revolution created a middle class, transforming yesterday's luxuries into everyday items, within reach of large numbers of people.

Spirituality has a similar history. In the past, priests, rabbis, imams, gurus, and other religious authorities set themselves up as intermediaries between common folk and the divine (God, Yahweh, Allah, etc.) Their message was that you won't get to heaven unless you follow the rules of the prevailing religion. Transcendent experiences were reserved for the holy; people like Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammad. And if you contradicted them, tried to usurp their authority, or talked about your own transcendent experiences, you were ruthlessly imprisoned, tortured, and killed.

For example, in 1600, Pope Clement VIII declared Giordano Bruno a heretic and the Inquisition had him burned to death at the stake. What were the terrible crimes for which he was killed? He had promoted Nicolaus Copernicus's theory that the Earth travels around the sun and that the stars were just other suns, both of which have been proven true by science. He also denied Catholic doctrines like eternal damnation, the divinity of Christ, the virginity of Mary, and transubstantiation (priests turning water into wine, etc.) Perhaps Bruno's biggest crime was refusing to recant and cave in to those who would quash the truth. (Sorry, but I have to side with Bruno on these matters).

It's not just Christianity. Most of the world's religions

do it. Jesus Christ was tortured and killed because his teachings (based on his firsthand experience) contradicted the prevailing Jewish religion. The Jews persecute Muslims today. Muslim extremists commit the most heinous atrocities in the name of Allah. Even Buddhists are not exempt. Buddhist countries like Thailand and Burma have long histories of violence and war.

Many people in the New Age movement revere the Dalai Lama and hold his peaceful message of Tibetan Buddhism as sacred, but if you go back even a hundred years, previous Dalai Lamas were greatly feared, and the Potala Palace in Llasa was basically a dungeon where unbelievers were imprisoned and tortured. [242]

But Gautama Buddha himself supposedly said "Three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth," and he was right. Just as science eventually proved Copernicus was right, it continues to uncover the truth today. It's slowly tearing down the Wizard's curtain, so to speak, to expose thousands of years of lies, manipulation and mind control by religious authorities. Many people who were once content to blindly follow organized religions are now starting to see through their lies. They're starting to understand they don't need an intermediary between them and the divine.

The truth will set you free, but there's also a down side: many people who abandon traditional religion also abandon the morality, love, respect, and reverence for life it teaches. They often abandon everything spiritual. So religious indoctrination is being replaced by scientific indoctrination and with it, blind materialism and consumerism, which by its nature is cold and impersonal.

To fill the void, people seek entertainment, but that is becoming increasingly violent and distancing. We teach our children through examples in television, movies, and games to embrace selfishness, indifference, and even violence. Consequently, mass shootings, stabbings, and violence are growing at an alarming rate. It seems like our world is becoming more hostile every day. It's not okay.

Religions are always built on the transcendent experiences of their founders, and I believe they're often OBEs disguised as something else. People like Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammad probably had OBEs that demonstrated "God" as divine universal consciousness. They tried to convey that message to their followers, but a message is only a pale shadow of firsthand experience. Lacking personal experience, divine messages quickly break down and are lost in the politics of religious control.

Now, thanks to science and technology, transcendent experiences like OBEs are becoming more available to everyone, not just the Buddhas and Christs. Just as science paved the way for an economic middle-class, I believe it will pave the way for a spiritual middle-class. And just as the twentieth century gave birth to the industrial revolution, I believe the twenty-first century will give birth to a spiritual revolution; an exponential expansion of consciousness. I firmly believe OBEs are a key part of that new renaissance.

Someone once said that the difference between religion and spirituality is that religion is belief in someone else's experiences, whereas spirituality is belief in your own. OBEs put spirituality into practice, transforming belief and faith into firsthand experience and observation, and from them, knowledge, which renders faith obsolete.

That's where you come in. I hope you'll be part of this exciting new revolution of consciousness. I hope you use the techniques and ideas in this book to induce your own OBEs and shed light on the path for the benefit of all humankind.

[242] My Journey To Llasa , Alexandra David-Neel, Beacon Press, 1986.

# About the Author

**Bob Peterson and his dog Spirit**

Robert (Bob) Peterson was born on April 14, 1961. He has been studying and inducing out-of-body experiences and psychic experiences since he graduated from high school in 1979. He graduated from the University of Minnesota Institute of Technology, with a B.S. degree in computer science in 1984. While attending the University, he became more proficient at out-of-body exploration, while keeping detailed journals of his experiences. At the same time, he did volunteer work for a student-based organization called the Minnesota Society for Parapsychological Research (MSPR), which gave him experience as a "Ghost Buster" long before the movie made the subject popular.

Since college, he's had a very successful career as a senior computer analyst. He lived in Phoenix, Arizona in 1985 and 1986, where he started contributing articles to a newsletter called The Spontaneous Self . In 1987, he moved to Rochester, Minnesota and worked as a contract programmer at the IBM plant until 1996. During that time, he compiled his experiences and journals into his first book, Out of Body Experiences: How to have them and what to expect (Hampton Roads Publishing, 1997) which has been available online for free since 1995. His second book, Lessons Out of the Body , was published in 2001. His third book is a novel titled The Gospel According to Mike . His fourth book, Answers Within , was published in 2013.

Today, Bob works as a kernel developer for Linux software leader Red Hat. He lives near Brainerd, Minnesota with his wife and soulmate, Kathy. They have no children. His other hobbies include writing, traveling, biking, woodworking, stained glass art, fishing, kayaking, and strategy games. His website is:

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